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THE EARL OF ELGIN













JAMES BRUCE, 8TH EARL OF ELGIN, AND 12TH EARL OF KINCARDINE



# THE EARL OF ELGIN

BY

GEORGE M. WRONG, M.A.

WITH NINETEEN ILLUSTRATIONS AND A MAP



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## PREFACE

RECENT events give, perhaps, a certain timeliness to the Life of Lord Elgin, who, as Dean Stanley said, "witnessed the successful accommodation of a more varied series of novel and entangled situations" than any other statesman of his time. He was the first Governor-General of Canada to accept fully the principle of colonial self-government; under him, too, Canadian differential duties in favour of Great Britain were repealed, and a reciprocity treaty was concluded with the United States. He was the first British Ambassador to make his way to the Chinese capital, there to ratify a treaty; as well as the first to conclude a commercial treaty with Japan. During the years of his active career he spent but little time in Britain, and the records of his life hardly touch either social or political questions at home. For this reason his biography is almost exclusively a chapter of British political history in scenes beyond the British Isles.



The chief material for the Life of Lord Elgin is in admirable form. He was fortunate in his private secretaries. One of them, Mr. Lawrence Oliphant, in his "Episodes in a Life of Adventure," describes a part of Lord Elgin's Canadian career, and in "The Earl of Elgin's Mission to China and Japan" he gives a lucid account of his chief's diplomacy in the East. The late Lord Loch was Lord Elgin's private secretary on the second mission to China, and wrote a spirited "Narrative of Events in China;" while a member of Lord Elgin's party, Mr. Bowlby, the correspondent of *The Times*, wrote for that newspaper very able despatches, abruptly ended by his seizure and death at the hands of the Chinese during the march on Peking. Lord Elgin himself was an admirable letter-writer. After his death, "Extracts from the Letters of James, Earl of Elgin, etc., to Mary Louisa, Countess of Elgin, 1847-62," were privately printed, and were used extensively by Mr. Theodore Walrond in his "Letters and Journals of Lord Elgin." In addition, Lord Elgin's despatches and speeches of course help to explain his career.

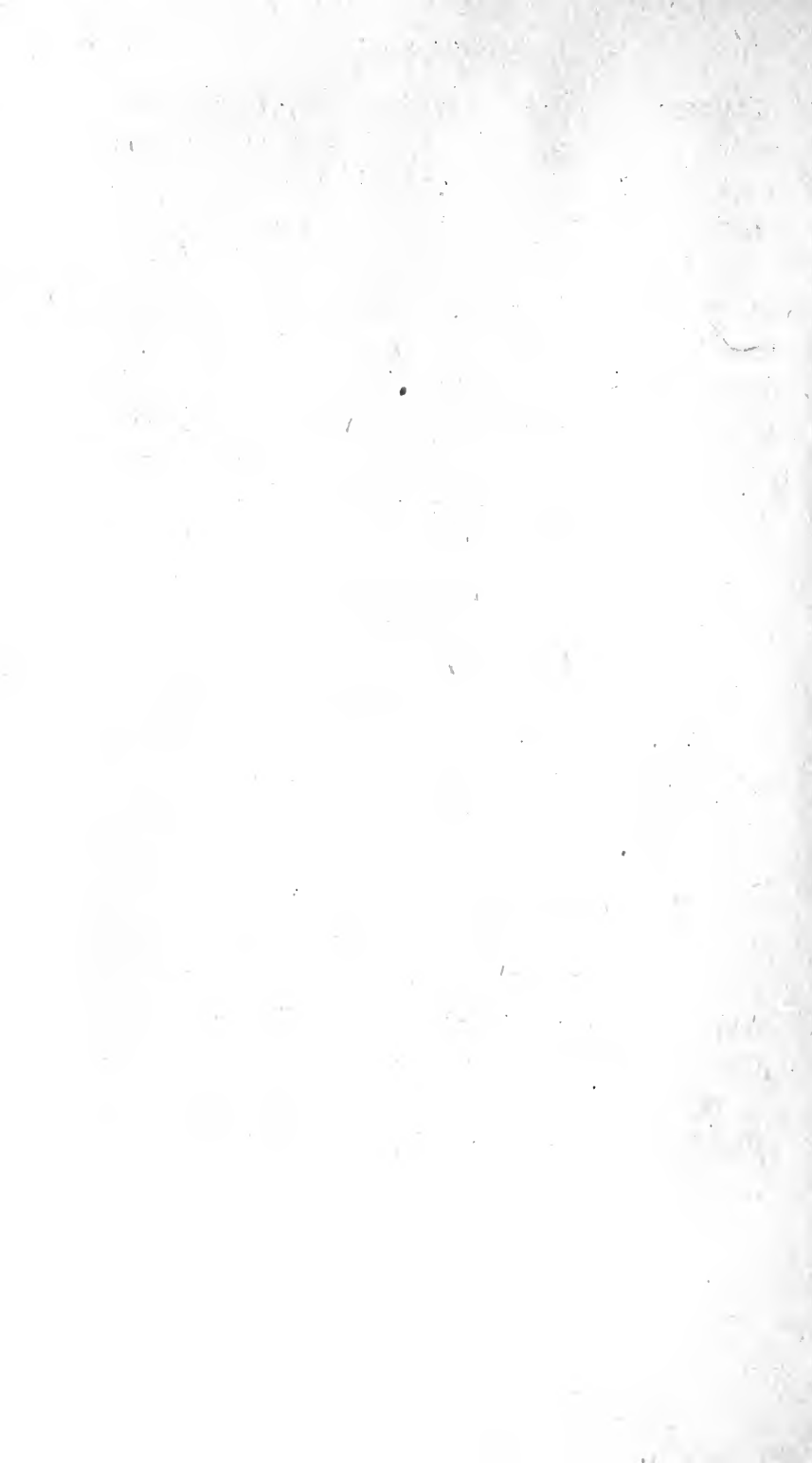
Two lives of Lord Elgin have already appeared; the one by Mr. Walrond mentioned above, and one by the late Sir John Bourinot, Clerk of the House of Commons of Canada,



published in 1903. Sir John Bourinot's work relates exclusively to Lord Elgin's political work in Canada. Mr. Walrond's memoir is able and authoritative, but it was published in 1872, before the significance of Lord Elgin's career was fully appreciated. In consequence, some questions, touched but lightly by Mr. Walrond, call now for special attention. It was Lord Elgin who, by his policy in Canada, completed the fabric of Britain's colonial system ; it was he who laid the basis of Britain's relations with Japan on lines that endured for nearly half a century, and the importance of this work was hardly to be seen in Mr. Walrond's day.

But while much of the present narrative is based upon material not used by Mr. Walrond, to his memoir the author must acknowledge great indebtedness. He is indebted also to the Earl of Elgin for the use of his father's privately printed letters, and also for kind interest and assistance in regard to some of the illustrations. To Dr. James Bain of the Toronto Public Library he desires to offer his acknowledgments for help in regard to Lord Elgin's *régime* in Canada ; and he owes much to the criticism of Professor W. J. Alexander, Ph.D., of University College, Toronto.







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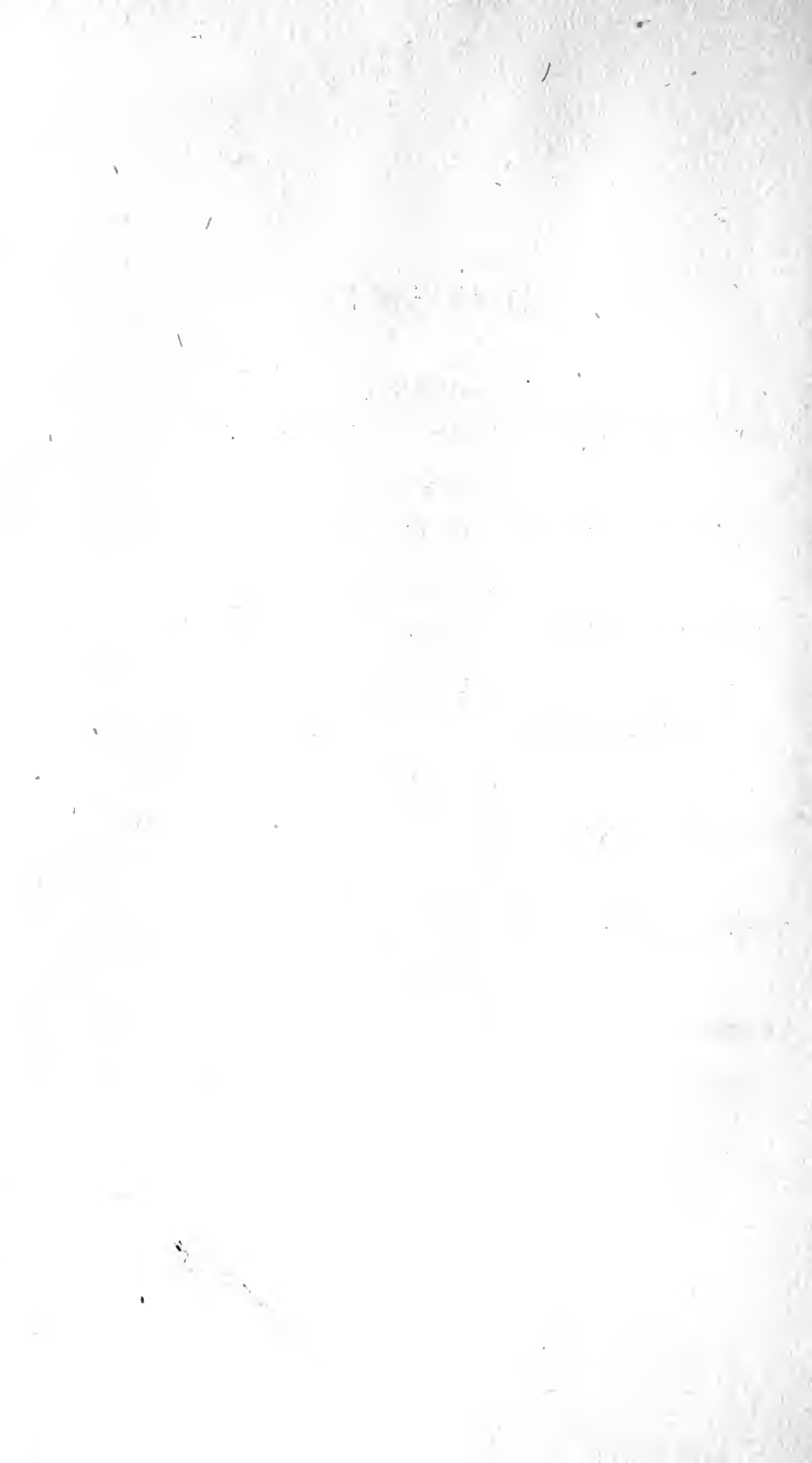
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# THE EARL OF ELGIN

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY YEARS AND GOVERNORSHIP OF JAMAICA, 1842-45

**T**HOUGH the house of Bruce has several ennobled branches, the Earl of Elgin is recognized as its head. The family of which the great Robert Bruce was the distinguished ornament is ancient enough, though we need not believe the legend deriving it from a follower of Rollo the Norman at the beginning of the tenth century, Brusi, perhaps one of the rude warriors who laughed hilariously when his brawny leader, raising the King of France's foot to his lips, in token of feudal homage, sent the monarch sprawling upon his back. But the authentic ancestry of the Bruces dates from a time well-nigh as ancient. More than one de Bruce accompanied William the Conqueror to England; in time some of them migrated to Scotland, and the family attained its height of glory when Robert Bruce became king.



When the Stuarts inherited the crown of England, Edward Bruce, first Lord Bruce of Kinloss, already a famous lawyer, went with James I. to London, became a naturalized Englishman, and Master of the Rolls. It was a son of this Bruce who went to Scotland with Charles I. in 1633, and gave the sanction of his historic name to Charles's fatal policy of forcing Episcopacy and a Liturgy upon the Scottish Church. In reward he was made Earl of Elgin in the peerage of Scotland, and also Baron Bruce in the English peerage. In time the Earls of Elgin, by an accident of inheritance, became also Earls of Kincardine. When the direct male line died out in 1747, the English peerage became extinct, and the Earls of Elgin were henceforth, for a hundred years, Scottish peers only. None of them was conspicuous in public life until the father of the subject of this memoir, Thomas, seventh Earl of Elgin and eleventh Earl of Kincardine (1766-1841), who found most of the wit, if but little of the reason, of his time against him for taking the famous sculptures from the Acropolis at Athens, and carrying them off to England.

This Lord Elgin was one of those who, in 1789, sat in the great hall at Versailles, and listened to the fiery oratory of Mirabeau. Against the new French Republic he was destined to play some part. In 1792, when only twenty-six, he was sent as special British Envoy to Brussels,



and a little later to Berlin. In 1798 Napoleon Bonaparte went to Egypt with gorgeous visions in his head of being a second Alexander, of over-running the East, driving the hated British out of India, and then, all-powerful, with oriental hordes at his command, of turning back to Europe to take it in the rear and make himself its master. To aid in checking France, Pitt sent Lord Elgin, in 1799, as Ambassador to Turkey, where his work against the French designs was not greatly unlike that of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe a little later against Russia. But it was as a friend of art that Lord Elgin attracted chief attention. The Turk was trampling upon Greece, and cared nothing for her peculiar treasures. Before going out, Lord Elgin had begged the British Government to give him some help to preserve casts and drawings of the perishing remnants of Grecian antiquity. The Government would not move, and Lord Elgin resolved to do what he could himself. His means were not great, and he found that he could not afford to pay the heavy cost of taking British artists to the East, but he secured a competent Italian, Lusieri, with a staff of his countrymen as draughtsmen and modellers, and soon had them busily engaged at Athens. The prestige of the British Ambassador secured some protection and opportunity for carrying on the work. But however complacently the officials at Constantinople may have assented to his plans, the Turks at Athens were on the outlook to appropriate the



hidden gold, really, as they thought, the object of search, and in a thousand annoying ways hampered Lord Elgin's work. At first he had no intention of doing more than making drawings and plans, but in time he resolved to transport bodily to England the most important sculptures at Athens. His reasons were twofold. If left where they were, the marbles would be ruined beyond recovery, for the Turk, when playful, amused himself by making a target of the loftiest sculptured heads on the Acropolis; and, when industrious, he realized that Phidias had shown good judgment in the choice of his marble, and that his statues, ground up, made admirable mortar, much used in building operations at Athens. The other reason was that, if England did not get the marbles, France would probably have taken them, an argument satisfactory to the British, if not wholly to the Greek, mind. But the Greeks were a feeble folk, and no one heeded their lament that Hellas should be stripped so ruthlessly of the noble relics belonging to her past; the Turk's interest in the marbles, for the moment the dominant one, was merely financial, and Lord Elgin, with the advantage of Britain's naval victories over the French in Eastern waters, was in the best position to make a bargain.

When, a little later, Byron viewed the Acropolis stripped of its chief beauty; when he looked upon the torn remnants of basso-relievos destroyed by Lord Elgin's force of three hundred workmen



in a vain attempt to remove them ; when, above all, he saw carved on the despoiled Parthenon the name of the Scottish peer who had wrought the havoc, his poetic wrath was not unnaturally aroused. Greece, struggling for freedom, had been wounded in the moment of her weakness by one who should have been her friend. So, in "The Curse of Minerva," the poet burst out against the robber Earl. Even Scotland, because she bore him, is pictured as a God-forsaken land, the eternal foe of sweetness and light, where

"Each breeze from foggy mount and marshy plain  
Dilutes with drivel every drizzly brain."

The blood of the Bruces was to be forever tainted ; it is not without interest to the biographer of one of Lord Elgin's gifted sons to record Minerva's curse on the whole progeny—

"First on the head of him who did the deed  
My curse shall light ; on him and all his seed :  
Without one spark of intellectual fire,  
Be all the sons as senseless as the sire.  
If one with wit the parent brood disgrace,  
Believe him bastard of a brighter race."

The treasure was not brought to England without huge trouble. With no roads and no adequate machinery it was a difficult task to carry the marbles even from Athens to the Peiræus ; then a ship with seven cases of the precious freight foundered and sank, and only after two years and at a cost of £5000 were these marbles rescued from the water. In 1803



Lord Elgin himself, returning home just at the time of the rupture of the Peace of Amiens, was among the hundreds of British subjects seized and long detained by Napoleon Bonaparte, on the unfounded plea that the British had been guilty of treacherous hostility before the outbreak of war. For three years the British Ambassador was detained in France as a prisoner, usually free on parole, but for a time closely held in the fortress of Lourdes on the slope of the Pyrenees. Here a spy tried to pass to him papers which, found in his possession, would have involved punishment and possibly execution for murderous designs against the French Government. His wise prudence in refusing to receive the incriminating documents saved him.\*

Lord Elgin returned to England in 1806. In 1810 he married his second wife, Elizabeth, daughter of J. T. Oswald, Esq., of Dunnikier, Fifeshire, and in the following year, on July 20, 1811, was born their eldest son, James, the subject of this memoir, who became the eighth Earl of Elgin and twelfth Earl of Kincardine. George, a son of the first marriage, was the heir to the title, and, until mature manhood, James Bruce had before him only the prospects of a younger

\* See Scott's "Life of Napoleon," chap. xxix. It was during Lord Elgin's captivity in France that the events occurred which led to the dissolution by Act of Parliament in 1808 of his first marriage. The experiences of Napoleon's captives are described in Alger's "Napoleon's British Visitors and Captives, 1801-15" (1904).



son. At the time of his birth his father was engaged in receiving the immensely bulky cases of marbles from Greece and in meeting the attacks upon him as her despoiler. For the marbles the Earl had paid out in all some £50,000, and this, with accumulated interest, left him out of pocket to the extent of some £70,000. His desire was that the nation should take the marbles and reimburse him. To making Britain a partner in Lord Elgin's work, a good many objected. A committee of Parliament was appointed to report on his collection, which he meanwhile exhibited in a barn-like appendage to his London house. In the end the Parliamentary Committee expressed approval of Lord Elgin's course. The purchase of the collection by the nation was decided upon, and in appreciation of his services to art he and his heirs with the title were made perpetual trustees of the British Museum. Thus all ended well, with the single exception that Lord Elgin was paid only one-half of the amount that he was out of pocket.

Broomhall, near Dunfermline, in Fifeshire, has been for many generations the chief seat of the family, and it was this Scottish home that James Bruce looked upon with special affection, though London was his birthplace and Paris for many years the chief residence of his parents. After the somewhat trying episode of the marbles, his father took no part in public life. He is described as of a "genial and playful spirit," with



attractive manners and the capacity for winning affection. Though for a great part of his life little among the people on his estate, he was much loved by them, and took an unselfish interest in their welfare. He extended his patronage of art to a patronage of artists. Scott has described his efforts on behalf of one needy member of the fraternity, and no doubt there were a good many others.

James Bruce was a blameless child, and gave early promise of the grave and earnest man that he became. It is a truly precocious virtue that inspired this prayer at the age of ten—"O may I set a good example to my brothers, let me not teach them anything that is bad, and may they not learn wickedness from seeing me. May I command my temper and my passions, and give me a better heart for their good." The child's education was moulded chiefly by his clever and deeply religious mother, and by his elder half-sister, Lady Matilda Bruce, afterwards the wife of Sir John Maxwell, of Pollok. The Countess of Elgin was a remarkable woman. "I think her excellent, interesting from her zest, energy, and simplicity, and more agreeable at a *tête-à-tête* than almost anybody," wrote Harriett, Countess Granville, in 1837. When in Scotland she was, Lady Granville reported, "never out of a riding habit," but her love of horses did not keep her from being a good mother, and her family, remarkable for capacity, but even more remarkable





BROOMHALL, DUNFERMLINE







for sterling qualities of character, did her credit. What the future Lord Elgin was we shall soon see. The second son, Robert, was chosen on account of his high character to be governor of the present King when he was growing up to manhood, and had an important share in his education. A third son, Sir Frederick Bruce, who died in 1867, while Minister to the United States, with intellectual powers of the first order was even more conspicuous for his high-minded integrity. Lady Elgin's daughter, Lady Augusta Bruce, who became the wife of Dean Stanley, was chosen by Queen Victoria as a special friend. Other children, if less conspicuous before the world, were not less estimable. There are families to whom virtue seems almost easy, and among them this generation of Bruces may fairly be ranked.

After the blameless days at home James Bruce was sent, at the age of fourteen, to Eton. Here he had as one of his companions a boy as blameless, and with an even more remarkable future before him—William Ewart Gladstone. Mr. Gladstone recalled young Bruce's talking to him with fervour at Eton of Milton's prose works, and added that he had probably not known before that Milton had written prose. It is pleasant to think of the two boys with brilliant futures discoursing about the great English champion of liberty. In those days an Eton boy appears to have studied as much or as little as he liked.



The head-master, Dr. Keate, though only about five feet in height, was a formidable person. To restore discipline he once flogged eighty boys in one day, and his victims said his name was derived from  $\chi\acute{\epsilon}\omega$  (I shed) and  $\acute{\alpha}\tau\eta$  (woe). Kinglake has recorded humorously that Keate's shaggy eyebrows were so prominent that he used them habitually as arms and hands to point out objects. But Bruce seems not to have suffered from undue severity. With Gladstone and Canning (later, like himself, ruler of India) and a few others he formed a club, the chief purpose of which was to go to Salt Hill on holidays, there to bully the fat waiter, eat toasted cheese, and drink egg-wine; so he had lighter diversions than reading Milton. But at Eton or at home he had, as his brother Frederick wrote, "none of the frailties of youth, and, though very capable of enjoying its diversions, life with him from a very early date was 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.'"

Passing in due course to Christ Church, Oxford, he had as fellow-students a brilliant group, which included James Ramsay, afterwards the Marquis of Dalhousie, and one of the most brilliant of India's governors, Canning, Roundell Palmer, afterwards Earl of Selborne, Sidney Herbert, W. E. Gladstone, Robert Lowe, and others who were to play important parts in the nation's life. Mr. Bagehot has told us that an "uncollegiate Englishman"—that is, one who has not gone to



Oxford or Cambridge—usually has no friends, since youth is the age for friendship, and only in the free companionship of college days can the habit of making friends be formed. But even while a collegian Bruce seems never to have made many intimate friends. If his lonely and reserved life strengthened a certain aloofness, natural to him, it did not keep him from winning admiration and respect; he studied very hard, and finally brought on by overwork an illness that prevented his going in for double honours and forced him to devote his time to Classics alone. He was always scholarly, he had a real poetic vein, and he acquired a concise and lucid English style. But he was not one to spend his best thought upon niceties of grammar or of fancy. Rather was his that quality which he thought Oxford in a special degree cultivates in her sons—the quality of philosophic insight; years after, in Canada, when addressing young men on the subject of education, he spoke of the value of a habit of mind which ever presses back to first principles, and is not satisfied with what he called “wretched half-truths.”

A thoughtful, hard-working youth, with abilities of the first order, and with the further advantage of being the scion of an ancient and noble house, was sure to find favour with the authorities of Christ Church. A valuable studentship falling vacant when Bruce's course was half finished, the Dean and Canons of Christ Church conferred it



upon him, as the most worthy of the undergraduates. The family estates were encumbered, and young Bruce was able in some degree to pay his own way at Oxford. Once when his father sent him a cheque he put it into the fire, saying that he had already made provision for himself. He had time to take part in the debates at the Oxford Union, and, according to Mr. Gladstone, who may be regarded as a judge of eloquence, in originality and in oratorical powers Bruce excelled all his contemporaries at Eton and at Oxford. Throughout life he continued to be a captivating speaker. Once when he was entertaining some American visitors at a great banquet in Toronto, they prepared themselves for the dull platitudes of a noble lord who, since he was an aristocrat, was supposed to owe his high post to anything but personal merit. But as the stately periods poured forth an amazed guest whispered, "He ought to be on our side of the line! We would make him mayor of our city." A little later he was constrained to say, "We'd make him governor, —governor of the state," and a brilliant passage called forth the final exclamation, "By Heaven, if he were on our side we'd make him president, nothing less than president!" He could speak impressively not only in English but in French; and in Canada he won the hearts of the French-Canadians by his eloquence in their own tongue.

In 1833 Bruce took his degree, with a first class in Classics, and with a reputation among his



contemporaries of being the best man in his year. He was soon elected fellow of Merton College, and this was in the good old days, when a fellowship involved one duty and one chief privilege—the duty of remaining unmarried and the privilege of drawing the emoluments. He left Oxford when the Tractarian Movement was under way. Though, on account of his connection with Scottish Presbyterianism, he would have little natural sympathy with High Anglican doctrine, his fine mind must have felt the spell of the splendid genius of Newman, already becoming conspicuous as an influence in Oxford. Afterwards, in Jamaica and Canada, he met with some of the less attractive phases of English ecclesiasticism, with a rigid Anglicanism that would not heed or bend to the stern logic of facts, but he always remained a firm and even an ardent opponent of the secular spirit, especially in regard to education; in Canada, he consented with regret to a Bill which devoted to secular purposes revenues originally set apart to promote Christian worship.

A little before he took his degree, the Reform Bill of 1832 became law, and to it, like another young Tory of the time, Mr. Gladstone, he was hostile. With no special occupation he lived much at Broomhall, where in the absence of his father he discharged the duties of the owner of the estate. In after years he liked to recall the high resolve of these days of preparation for his career. He read industriously, and wrote both in



poetry and in prose ; to his younger brother Frederick at Oxford, he played especially the part of mentor, sending him long letters on philosophical subjects ; he joined Dr. Chalmers in urging Church extension in Scotland. In politics too he took an active interest. The Duke of Wellington was then extremely unpopular, because of his recent determined fight against the Reform Bill. In the exuberance of his high Toryism, the Duke had declared that England needed no reform, and that, even if her political machinery were to be re-made, nothing better than an exact copy of what the Whigs so furiously attacked could be devised. This aroused much discussion, and the young philosopher of Broomhall, though himself by no means a Tory of the Duke's school, came to his defence ; in 1834 he issued a "Letter to the Electors of Great Britain" in support of the Duke and the Tory leaders. What effect this pronouncement may have had is not written. We are tempted to smile at a grave political appeal to the nation by a youth of twenty-three on his own authority. But he bore a great name ; and, after all, when only a little older, Pitt was Prime Minister, and Bruce, like Pitt, was mature in thought while in years still almost a boy.

In 1835, with some thought of making a career for himself at the Bar, he entered at Lincoln's Inn. But he did not "eat his dinners," and he took no further steps towards a profession.



Though busily engaged in looking after the family estates, a task which fell to him instead of to his elder brother George, Lord Bruce, who was prostrated by a long and painful illness, he had an eye to a political career, and in 1837 offered himself as a candidate for the House of Commons for Fifeshire. But he was beaten by a large majority; since 1832, when they first really secured self-government, the Scottish people had not taken kindly to Conservatism.

In his life changes followed quickly. When, in 1840, his brother George, to whom he showed great devotion, died, he became Lord Bruce, and heir to the earldom. In April, 1841, he married Elizabeth Mary, the daughter of Mr. C. L. Cumming Bruce, and in July of that year he stood for the borough of Southampton, and was elected to the House of Commons at the head of the poll. But in November this phase of his career ended, when his father died at Paris in ripe old age, and he became Earl of Elgin. This made him a peer, not of the United Kingdom, but of Scotland, and he had no seat in the House of Lords. It seemed as if his political career must end, for Scottish peers think it beneath their dignity to sit in the House of Commons. In danger of being hung up, as it were, between heaven and earth, Lord Elgin for a time thought of testing the legality of his exclusion from the House of Commons, but he abandoned this plan, and a new career soon



opened to him. In April, 1842, he was appointed by Sir Robert Peel to the difficult post of Governor of Jamaica.

If Britain is not now, sixty years ago she certainly was, a state administered by the upper classes—those classes whom Tocqueville thought better qualified by education to rule than are the leaders of a democracy representing only the intelligence of the average man. Lord Elgin's friends at Eton and at Christ Church were men destined to rule their fellow-men, and accustomed to look upon themselves as such; he himself, though at thirty probably the youngest governor ever appointed, was yet a trained statesman. In addition to industry and keen intelligence he had attractive personal qualities. If grave and serious, he was yet quick at repartee; he had sympathy, tact, and the saving sense of humour; he could keep a dinner-table amused by a good story. Though his manner was sometimes brusque, he often showed a remarkable faculty for turning enemies into friends.

In April, 1842, Lord Elgin left England for Jamaica. On the way he experienced the dramatic and, for him, tragic consequences of shipwreck; the steamer struck on the coral reefs surrounding Turk's Island, one of the Bahamas, and became a total wreck. No lives were lost, but Lady Elgin received a shock from which she never recovered. When, in the following summer, she died in Jamaica, Lord Elgin was so prostrated



by grief that his recovery seemed doubtful. He was left with one infant daughter. From utter loneliness the society of his own kindred saved him; with him were his sister Charlotte, afterwards Lady Charlotte Locker, and his brother Robert, the latter as his secretary. Though living chiefly at the country house Craigton, in the Blue Mountains, he did not neglect holding at Spanish Town, then the capital of Jamaica, the receptions and entertainments which must be a heavy burden upon the time and patience of those in high official position. The life was sufficiently monotonous, and after three years he longed for more active employment.

The present generation finds it hard to realize how important a place the West India Islands occupied in European thought and commerce not so very long ago; at the close of the eighteenth century they still, as sources of wealth, played a greater part in the public mind than did the Far East. As a step towards world power, the imperial mind of Oliver Cromwell had planned to conquer the West Indies, but of his large schemes Jamaica was the only permanent trophy. Though in the eighteenth century the island was prosperous and important, by the early years of the nineteenth the sugar industry had begun to decline, and the planters were being slowly ruined. Their plight was made worse by the uncertainty of the outlook in regard to slave labour. When the slave trade was abolished in 1807, the end



of slavery itself could not be long deferred, and from that time the Jamaica planters grew more and more nervous at the menace to their property in slaves. Naturally, the slaves in turn showed increasing impatience for the dawn of liberty. In 1832 they revolted, with accompaniments of murder and destruction of property that showed the bitterness of the racial strife, and this outbreak helped to make inevitable the immediate abolition of slavery. In 1833 the British Parliament, in the early days of its reforming zeal after the passing of the Reform Bill, decreed the complete emancipation of the slaves. The Jamaica planters took emancipation as a death-blow. Although they received more than £6,000,000 of the £20,000,000 voted in compensation to slave-owners throughout the Empire, they protested that they were ruined, and for years the outlook seemed desperate. Spain did not emancipate her slaves, and side by side with free Jamaica was the Spanish colony of Cuba, where the planters had still a supply of slave labour; for a time at least Jamaica sugar could not compete in price with that of Cuba.

These problems were still fresh when Lord Elgin went to Jamaica in 1842. Though no radical changes marked his period of office, he gained there an excellent training for the more difficult work which lay before him in Canada. He encouraged the planters to abandon the attitude of despair, and to make up for dearer



labour by better means of production. Besides offering prizes for the best method of cultivating the sugar-cane, he aided an agricultural society, of which the Queen consented to be patroness. The negroes he thought well off. On the whole they were sober and frugal; they had a suitable climate and a friendly soil, for which they paid almost no rent. Food was easily provided, and since, in the tropical climate, little in the way of clothing or of fuel was necessary, it was so easy to get a living that strong inducements to steady labour were wanting; to this day the great mass of the labourers in Jamaica will not work more than from four to five days a week. "I doubt," said Lord Elgin, "whether any people on the face of the globe enjoy as large a share of happiness as the Creole peasantry of this land." In the Kingston shops negro women were able to buy expensive articles of dress; and even farm servants kept good riding horses for their amusement. In Lord Elgin's view abolition had involved betterment, and no class in Jamaica seemed to have any serious grievances. But neither negro nor white was contented; the racial strife went on, and in 1865 the ruthless severity of one of Lord Elgin's successors, Governor Eyre, in quelling a negro insurrection, attracted, amidst much censure, the support of advocates of thoroughness like Thomas Carlyle.

When, in the spring of 1846, Lord Elgin went home, it was nominally on leave of absence,



though to Jamaica he was resolved not to return. By Peel's abolition of the Corn Laws, the Tory party had just been broken up, and with the Whigs, or, as they may now be called, the Liberals, in power, Lord Elgin could hope for nothing in the way of employment had rigid party traditions been followed. But his despatches from Jamaica had impressed official circles with his capacity; already he was trusted by both parties, and the important office of Governor-General of British North America was soon offered to him by Lord Grey, Colonial Secretary in Lord John Russell's new cabinet that had displaced Peel. It was a task to call forth his best qualities, and he accepted it. Meanwhile he formed a marriage tie that would help his popularity in his new sphere. After Canada's serious rebellion in 1837, the Earl of Durham, sent out in 1838 as Governor of British North America, proved, as his famous report shows, to be the first Englishman to grapple adequately with the situation. When, on November 7, 1846, Lord Elgin married Lady Mary Louisa Lambton, the deceased Earl of Durham's daughter, it was of good omen to the policy that he should pursue in Canada. She had been in Canada with her father, and had understood and sympathized with his plans. The link between the two *régimes* of Lord Durham and of Lord Elgin in Canada was thus very real. At the Colonial Office, too, there was a family tie, for Lord Grey, the Colonial Secretary, was Lady Elgin's uncle.



## CHAPTER II

### GOVERNORSHIP OF CANADA, 1847-54

LEAVING his bride to follow him later, so as to avoid the inclement winter passage, Lord Elgin made a stormy voyage to America in January, 1847. He landed at Boston, where the officials gave him a cordial and almost public reception, a courtesy to a man of distinction less usual in these later days of more frequent travel. From Boston to Montreal he could go for only part of the way by rail. The journey was completed in sleighs, and occupied four days. On January 30 he made a public entry into Montreal, and his first address showed him to be a man of resolution who could think for himself. A government hostile to the French element in Canada was in power, and if the Governor was to play a decided *rôle* at all, his ministers would have wished that he should champion their interests. But he announced, in unmistakable terms, that he had adopted Lord Durham's views of government, which meant that the majority in Canada should rule the country, and that the French should have the



share in controlling the state to which their numbers entitled them.

Lord Elgin was now thirty-five, and for his years old, both in appearance and in thought. His affable manners and his gifts as a ready speaker quickly made him popular. People who remembered the almost oriental pomp of Lord Durham in Canada were struck by his son-in-law's simplicity. Soon after arriving, to catch an outgoing English mail, he walked from Monklands, his suburban residence, to Montreal, in a snowstorm, in which he says hardly any other biped was abroad. Canada delighted him. He was full of admiration for this "glorious country," and for "its perfectly independent inhabitants;" he finds himself beginning "to doubt whether it be possible to acquire a sufficient knowledge of men or nature, as to obtain an insight into the future of nations without visiting America."

When Lord Elgin said that in Canada he should pursue the policy of Lord Durham, he was appealing to an example that in its day had greatly stirred the British political world. Never so much as in 1837-38 had Canada been in the minds of British statesmen. It began then to look as if Britain had finally failed as a colonizing power. The art of building up a colonial empire is not, as so often supposed, instinctive to the Anglo-Saxon; it is something that needs to be learned, and in 1837 Britain was so far from having learned it that nearly every colony was



discontented, and, to some, the loss of Canada seemed imminent. After Lord Durham had surveyed conditions in Canada, he said bluntly that the experiment of governing the colonies well had never even been tried. The British Empire of to-day is some evidence of the Anglo-Saxon's native power to make at least the beginnings of an empire; but to settle stable lines of future development something more than vigour and energy was necessary. Imagination to construct an as yet unrealized political system and adaptability to conditions differing from those in England were no less required, and precisely in these qualities is the average Briton most defective.

Britain's experience with the revolted American colonies might have taught her the one pregnant lesson for producing rest in the colonies. They must be put in control of their own affairs; nothing less would ever create content. But this need of letting a nation rule itself was only slowly learned even in Britain; not until the second quarter of the nineteenth century did the British people win self-government, and it was not unnatural that some time should still elapse before the same necessity was admitted for the colonies. A benevolent Secretary for the Colonies, and most Colonial Secretaries were benevolent in intention, was always anxious to make them happy, but his instinct was against trusting them to look after themselves. And



they were not self-reliant; they were, without exception, a charge upon the revenues of the mother-country, and this gave her the formal right to control them. So it came about that from the point of view of London at that time it would have been as absurd to give these great communities across the sea the complete machinery of national life, as it would have been to set up a full-fledged parliament for an English county. The Colonial Office was sure that it could provide better for the ultimate destiny of more than a million people in Canada than could the Canadians themselves. Colonial political morality it was afraid to trust, and control from London, it thought, involved higher and better ideals than the narrower colonial vision could possibly keep in view. Left free to govern themselves, the colonies might even break away from the mother-country; Canada in particular might easily be absorbed by her great neighbour, the United States. Radicals indeed said this was the best thing that could happen, and that in any case Canada should become a republic; even high officials sometimes expressed this view in Parliament, but the instinct, if not the reasoning, of the average man was against any severance of Britain across the sea from Britain at home, and the Colonial Office blundered on, not knowing half the time what it really wanted.

But that the colonial problem was pressing had become apparent in 1837. Canada was face



to face with civil war. Two wholly separated governments made up the Canada of that day. Upper Canada was English, Lower Canada French, and each had become acutely discontented. Their problems were essentially different. In Upper Canada, settled by a population British in origin, public opinion demanded that the governor, the nominee of the Colonial Office, should accept the measures, not of the Colonial Secretary or of the small official clique which surrounded him at Toronto, but of the majority in the Legislature. The people elected this Legislature to speak for them, and presumably knew what they were doing. But the governors held that their mandate was from the Colonial Office, and they steadily declined to accept any views that made Canada independent of control from London. The quarrel became acute, and even the Colonial Office was profoundly impressed, in 1837, when William Lyon Mackenzie, the Radical leader in Upper Canada, resorted to the last appeal of the discontented and took up arms.

In Lower Canada there was a similar situation, based upon different causes. Of 650,000 people in the province, probably not more than one in six was of British origin. On a sufficiently liberal franchise the people elected members to represent them in their Legislature. But this Legislature was chiefly French, and in the view of the Colonial Office assuredly a French Legislature could not be trusted when even the English one



in Upper Canada had little real power. And so it happened that the people's representatives in Lower Canada found themselves impotent. The governors nominated the second chamber, which had the restraining power of the House of Lords; they openly avowed that they were under no obligations to accept the measures of their Parliament, and in this policy they were ardently supported by the English-speaking minority. The commercial interests at Montreal, the most important city in Canada, were in the hands of the English, and these had a nervous fear of French dominance in the province. There was, indeed, the most complete severance between the two races. They had different creeds; they spoke different languages; they hardly met in social intercourse. At an agricultural fair at Quebec Lord Durham noted that they would not even compete in the same class, and there were separate trials of skill for French and English. The English despised the French as a spiritless people. During Papineau's agitation, which led to rebellion, they spoke contemptuously of the "moutons," the timid sheep who followed a blatant leader. On the other hand, the French, conscious of the real power that numbers gave, and maddened by these signs of contempt, and by inveterate checks upon their just liberties, carried on a bitter racial war.

It was amid such conditions that some of the French made their rash appeal to arms in 1837. Of course the military rising proved entirely futile;



but none the less were there some terrible scenes. Papineau, the rebel leader, had the Gallic gift of oratory, but he was without genius for organization; he even lacked courage, and from the first the rebel cause was hopeless. But military impotence only envenomed hatred. An English officer, Lieutenant Weir, falling into the hands of the rebels, was hacked to death, apparently with an axe, and other atrocities of like nature enraged the loyal party. They took a terrible vengeance. At St. Eustache, near Montreal, the village doctor, Chenier, with a band of patriots resolved to make a stand against two thousand troops led by an able and skilful officer, the Commander-in-Chief in Canada, Sir John Colborne, a veteran of Waterloo. After a hopeless struggle Chenier, with some of the insurgents, was at last forced into the village church. When this took fire those within were burned, those who tried to escape were shot down; not unlike Cromwell's terrible work in the church at Drogheda was that in the church at St. Eustache. To kill Chenier and some seventy of his followers was not enough. In Colborne's force were many volunteers who had long lived in daily fear of the revenge which the French would wreak when they overthrew English dominance, and now these could hardly be controlled. Though the villagers of St. Eustache had not been active on the rebel side this did not save them. Their homes were ruthlessly burned, and some of those who perished were guiltless of

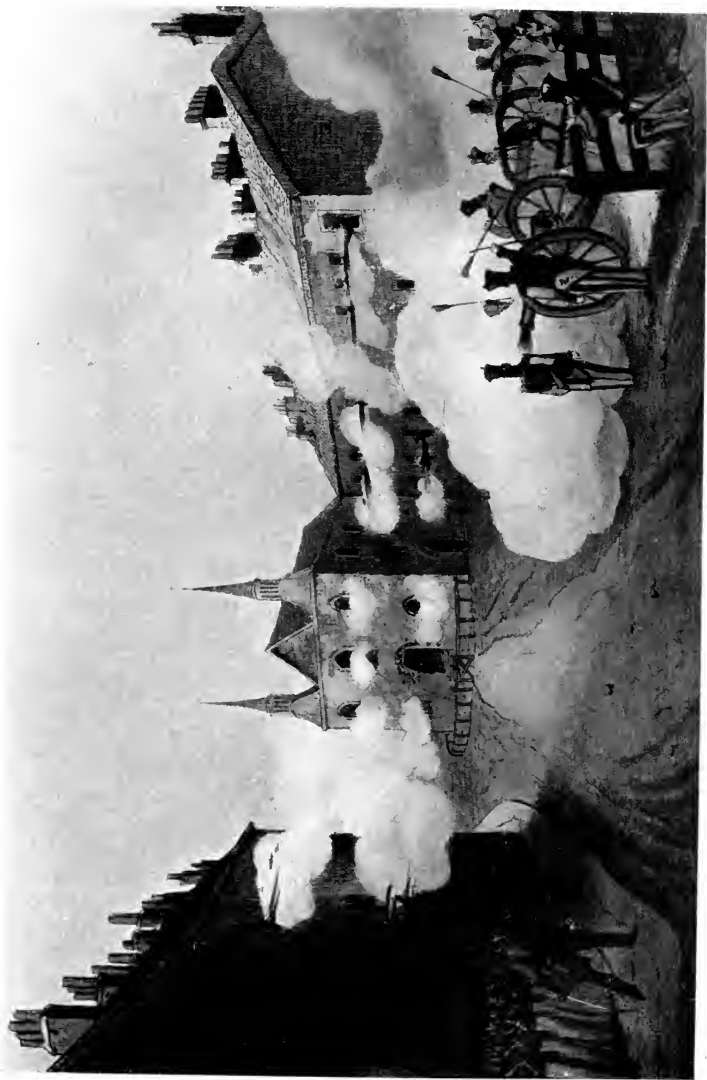


anything but of being French Canadians. The day of reckoning for the needless destruction of life and property was bound to come, and it was Lord Elgin who had to bear the final odium of doing justice.

This desperate situation in Canada in 1837 had required a strong remedy. When the rebellion broke out a Whig Government, under the somewhat nerveless Lord Melbourne, was in power in England, and upon it lay the necessity of action. It was hampered by a notoriously incompetent Colonial Secretary, Lord Glenelg, and, in waiting to attack it, were not only the Tories, led by the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel, and Radical leaders like Molesworth, Grote, and Joseph Hume, but also one of the most skilful Whig leaders of the time, Lord Brougham, enraged because he had not been given the office of Lord Chancellor. Melbourne's cabinet decided that, since civil government had completely broken down in Lower Canada, the constitution should be suspended, and that ample powers should be conferred upon some competent British statesman to go out to rule Canada during the crisis, and to recommend a future policy to the home Government.

It was a great opportunity for a man of insight and capacity, and finally the Cabinet made its selection. The man it sent to Canada was John George Lambton, Earl of Durham. No choice could have attracted more attention. Durham





THE TAKING OF THE CHURCH OF ST. EUSTACHE







occupied a conspicuous place in the political life of the time, as the leader of the Radical wing of the Whigs. He was a great landowner of a family very ancient, but not ennobled until he himself was made a peer in 1828. While the friend of the oppressed, the champion of popular rights, he had the spirit of the Whig aristocrat, and was without sympathy for the attacks of extremists upon rank and property. Durham was in truth rather a benevolent despot in spirit than a popular leader. But he showed chivalrous generosity and unflinching courage in asserting his convictions. He favoured the ballot when it was still looked upon by his friends as a subtle agent for the undoing of those who had any stake in property. He had helped to shape the great Reform Bill of 1832, and he was always on the side of bold thoroughness as against temporizing half-measures. It was said of him that he had "a genius for truth," and that when he went on missions to foreign courts, he spent the first week in making potentates understand that he meant exactly what he said, not less or more. His political colleagues had not found it easy to work with him. Incapable as any Stuart of doing justice to the arguments of opponents, he was arrogant, rude, brusque, and had an irritable and uncontrolled temper that often showed itself in unseemly rage. Earl Grey, the Prime Minister who carried the Reform Bill, was Durham's father-in-law, and there was much gossip about



the impassioned outbursts of Durham, the "dissenting minister" as he was called, against his relative. At a Cabinet dinner in Lord Althorp's house, he denounced Lord Grey as a traitor to the Whig party, and stormed out of the house after a painful scene. These outbreaks were due partly to ill-health. Durham was never strong physically, and indigestion and rheumatism are especially inimical to equability of temper.

When Lord Durham was appointed High Commissioner to Canada, it was freely said that Melbourne's Cabinet wished to get rid for a time of a man whom they could not work with, and whom they dared not offend. He received great authority. Not only over the whole of British North America was he given the usual powers of a governor-general; he had besides the legislative powers of the Parliament of Lower Canada, now suspended. No British sovereign has ever possessed the power in England that Durham was granted in Canada, and, considering his authority, he may be excused if he took his mission very seriously. An elaborate retinue went with him. He demanded a chief secretary and a legal adviser, each to receive £1500; a military secretary at £700; two assistant secretaries at £600; eight aides-de-camp, and so on. Pomp and display he loved. The newspapers got hold of the fact that he was taking his gold and silver plate to Canada, and there were many jests at these preparations to pacify the untutored



THE EARL OF  
DURHAM



THE EARL OF DURHAM







*habitants* of Lower Canada. The warship *Hastings*, in which he went out, would be sunk, it was said, by the weight of his plate. When he disembarked in Canada, it took days to remove his vast and interminable baggage from the ship.

The 28th of May, 1838, saw the quiet city of Quebec startled by a brilliant pageant; on that day Lord Durham landed in the most picturesque of new world cities. In early years he had served in the Army, and now, in a full general's uniform, and mounted on a white charger, he indulged his taste for military parade, and, surrounded by a brilliant staff, rode through the streets of Quebec to the Governor's residence, the Castle of St. Louis. The people whom he had come to rule, and also to serve with the best powers of his undoubted genius, were not left even for a day without a message from him. Immediately after landing, he issued a proclamation calling upon the Canadians to unite with him "in the blessed work of peace and harmony," and inviting them to make him the recipients of their wishes, complaints, and grievances. At once he named a new executive council to advise him, and devoted himself to the arduous labours that his complex task involved.

He bore himself with characteristic stateliness. His staff, when he rode out, was almost as showy as that of an Eastern satrap; the magnificent appointments of Lady Durham's drawing-room were a marvel; royal feasts were given at the



Castle of St. Louis. And all the time Durham was half an invalid, confined to the house for days, and with the shadow of his early death already upon him. Yet he inspired the varied inquiries that were to lead the British public for the first time to understand something of the real meaning of Canada's problems. He tried to make the French see that he was their friend. He read assiduously the utterances of their press, and understood, if he did not adopt, their point of view. To the French problem he did not confine himself. He visited Upper Canada, of which also he was Governor-General, and used his authority to tell its stern Lieutenant-Governor, Sir George Arthur, who, as a result of the recent troubles, had been sending too many men to the scaffold, that there must be no more political executions. He went even further afield, and summoned delegates from Nova Scotia, and the other maritime provinces in the far east, to meet him at Quebec in the autumn.

Durham's chief problem was to reconcile the English and the French; he found them, in his own famous phrase, "two people warring in the bosom of a single state," and waging precisely the kind of war most difficult to end, because least reasonable and definite in its cause and purpose. The French Canadians were now a people held down by force of arms; Colborne's twelve thousand British troops were a grim reality before their eyes. But none the less were they



resolved to have a state controlled by themselves. To this the English minority were unalterably opposed, and Durham slowly came to the conclusion that the only hope for Canada was to make the English supreme. To do this but one way seemed open. If he abolished totally the existing division between Upper and Lower Canada ; if, instead of two Parliaments, there was but one, in which both English and French sat, the French would from the first be equalled ; and, since the English, by immigration, were increasing the more rapidly, the French would in the end be outnumbered, and Canada would be prevailingly British. Through Lord Durham's mind there flitted the wider vision of a federation of British North America, which should include the maritime provinces and Newfoundland. But it was a vision to be realized by others, not by him. In 1838 federation would have left the French supreme in their government as a province of the union, and this Lord Durham feared.

While he was working out a plan for the future the present was all urgent. The gaols of Lower Canada were full of rebel prisoners. Though some of the leaders had escaped to the United States, others were in custody, and what should he do with them? To try them by a French jury would mean acquittal in the face of obvious guilt ; while an English jury would show no pity. Durham himself wished to grant free pardons to the leaders, but the English party



said this would be to condone treason, and he feared to oppose them too strongly. In the end he decided to banish the chief of the prisoners to Bermuda, with their own consent and without trial, intending that, as soon as the province was quiet, they should be allowed to return to Canada. In Bermuda, while under surveillance, they were to be treated mildly as political exiles; but his ordinance declared that if they returned to Canada without leave, they were to be subject to the penalty of death. It was a wise and merciful policy, but it had the fatal flaw that it was illegal. Since even the sovereign could not impose penalties upon his subjects without trial, assuredly Lord Durham had no such power, and he also had no authority to commit prisoners to the custody of the Government of Bermuda, which was wholly beyond his jurisdiction.

This step, fatal in law but marked by the generosity of a great mind, was the ruin of Lord Durham. Brougham attacked him unsparingly. The Whig and Tory press in England were alike against the Radical earl, and Lord Melbourne gave him only half-hearted support. So it happened that while Durham, having tempered justice with mercy in the case of the prisoners, was busy with his further constructive work in Canada, his foes were busy in England with plans to undo him. On August 7 Brougham began the attack. In the House of Lords, where Durham had hardly a friend, he was easily



condemned. In the House of Commons, where the Government commanded a majority, he might have fared better. But Melbourne submitted without a struggle, and announced that the Cabinet would advise the Queen to disallow Durham's ordinance. It was a betrayal; for Durham should either have been supported or recalled; Melbourne, adopting the weak course of disavowing him and at the same time of desiring him to retain his office, had not even the courtesy to write promptly to him, and it was from the American newspapers that the unfortunate ruler of Canada first heard the fate of his measure. The staggering blow almost prostrated him.

Durham had arranged to meet delegates from the maritime provinces at Quebec on September 22, to review their affairs, as he had already reviewed those of Upper and Lower Canada, and this meeting took place three days after he had received the fatal news. In addressing the delegates he told them of the hopes and aims of his mission, and then, deeply moved, he declared that he had been sacrificed by his friends. Emotion overcame even that proud spirit. He retired to a corner of the room in tears, but when after a few minutes he could speak further, he announced that his work in Canada was at an end, and that he should at once return to England. Of himself he spoke as "a degraded, disavowed Governor." He remained to finish only the most



necessary duties, and on November 1, 1838, escorted to his ship by a vast crowd remarkable for the deep silence with which it showed its sympathy as he passed, Lord Durham sailed for home; so ill was he that he hardly expected to reach England alive. To others besides himself his going proved tragic. The English saw him depart with well-grounded fears that the hope of settlement was over, and that in a few days they might be fighting for their lives; and more promptly than could have been expected came the dreaded event. On November 4 the rebels were again in arms. Forty thousand American sympathizers, it was said, were ready to invade the country, and in the face of such a force even Colborne's 12,000 men could hardly hope to triumph. But the unhappy rebels were again deceived. They secured little aid, they were helpless before Colborne's masterly plans, and soon burning villages were once more the vengeance the loyalists took against their shattered assailants. The Montreal *Herald* of November 13 described one more of the scenes of horror with which Canada was now growing familiar :\*

"On Sunday evening the whole of the country about La Prairie presented the awful spectacle of one vast sheet of lurid flame, and

\* For this quotation, and for an able discussion of Lord Durham's mission, I am indebted to Mr. F. Bradshaw's "Self-Government in Canada" (1903).



it is reported that not a single house has been left standing."

The writer then proceeds to moralize about the terrible sufferings of the rebels, but ends with the characteristic note of racial war: "The history of the past proves that nothing but sweeping them from the earth and laying their habitations in the dust will prevent renewed rebellion." This was the note which Lord Elgin still heard, eight years later, when he arrived in Canada.

Lord Durham's task did not end when he left Quebec. He had collected a vast body of material for a "Report" upon Canada, and, early in 1839, the document, perhaps the most famous in British colonial history, was published. There has been much profitless speculation as to how much is due to himself and how much to the members of his staff. It is enough to say that the "Report" describes with masterly, if not always accurate, detail the conditions in Canada, and that, above everything else, Lord Durham recommended the ending of the Colonial Office's dreary record of ineptitude by giving Canada a full measure of self-government.

A part, and not the best part, of his recommendations was carried out. Nothing appealed to the average Briton's consciousness of superiority more than Durham's proposal that the aspirations of the French province should be ended by uniting it to the English province, and swamping the



French Canadian with the tide of English bound to flow into the country. Not the best part of Lord Durham's policy was this, because, by the fear of absorption, it was bound in time to stimulate the French Canadians to a renewed assertion of their national aspirations. But in 1840 French Canada was prostrate, and the masters did as they liked. On July 23, 1840, the Queen assented to an Act of Union which gave Canada one supreme legislature. Lord Durham's desire for self-government was heeded less than his plan for union. It is true the Government sent to Canada in 1839 an able man, a friend too of Lord Durham, Mr. Poulett Thomson, who became Baron Sydenham and Toronto; but while he was to consult the wishes of the Canadians he was not to be bound by them. The Bill brought something like dramatic if tragic completeness to Lord Durham's career. While it was passing through its last stages he lay dying at Cowes, and on July 28, 1840, five days after it became law, he breathed his last.

Lord Durham left a legacy the meaning of which was only slowly understood. Faulty though the Union was, it yet created in germ something like a Canadian nation, nearly half as populous as were the United States when they took their place as a nation with a voice in world politics. And with the brilliant exposition of the colonial problem contained in that great "Report," the British mind could never again see Canada in quite



the same light as before. Yet Poulett Thomson went to Canada making merry in his heart at the idea that he was to be in Canada a constitutional ruler as the sovereign is in England. "Either the governor is the sovereign," said he to the Canadians, "or the minister," and he proceeded to show that it was the governor who could not possibly be "under the control of men in the colonies." His career was cut short with tragic suddenness by a fall from his horse in 1841. His successor, Sir Charles Metcalfe, a high-minded man, whom, as Edward Gibbon Wakefield said, "God made greater than the Colonial Office," found in power the Liberals, Baldwin and La Fontaine, with a comfortable majority in the Legislature. But declaring that it was his prerogative, not theirs, to fill at least some of the offices, he proceeded to make appointments without consulting them, and finally intrigued with the Opposition for their overthrow; and all with the belief that this was the only way to preserve the empire. The good constitutional rule that grants of money can be made only by the representatives of the people, was held not wholly to apply to the colonies. Lord Stanley, a Colonial Secretary during Lord Elgin's term of office, repudiated the idea that the British Government might not, without consulting the Canadian ministers, grant pensions chargeable on the Canadian revenues. Since the home Government thus still assumed to act for Canada, it was not unnatural that the



Opposition in England should make party capital out of anything that happened in the colonies, and one of the things that at a later time stirred something like rage in Lord Elgin's heart was the ignorant and envenomed attacks upon him at Westminster for acts of government in Canada which his assailants had not taken the least trouble to understand.

It is now easy enough, it is too easy, to gird at the Colonial Office ; but unhappily the truth is, that in the history of Canada there seemed little to promise wise and strong self-government. With a lack of sane political life and of self-reliance, the opposing elements were factions rather than parties. Either side was quite ready to appeal for intervention to London as long as such intervention seemed likely to further the purpose of the faction demanding it, and the weaker the disputants were in Canada, the more clamorous and violent did they become in order to attract attention in the mother country. In reality no very urgent issues divided the parties. "There are no real grievances here," said Lord Elgin, "to stir the depths of the popular mind. We are a comfortable people with plenty to eat and drink, no privileged classes to excite envy, or taxes to produce irritation. It were ungrateful to view these blessings with regret, and yet I believe that they account in some measure for the selfishness of public men and their indifference to the higher aims of statesmanship." So far was Canada



from national life that she did not conduct even her own post-office, which was an Imperial affair, and the native tribes were the wards not of the Canadian but of the Imperial Government. A considerable number of Imperial regiments permanently occupied the country, in the view of some "to hold it down." Since the elements in Canada that should make for the wise exercise of responsibility were as yet untried, thoughtful men may well have feared too complete a trust in the political instincts of a people likely to be parochial in outlook. Yet it is a reassuring trait in human nature that, once clothed with responsibility, men often show strong qualities hardly before suspected, and this old truth was soon to be demonstrated in Canadian political life. But only a statesman of liberal and clearly defined principles and of resolute character could really trust in such an outcome, and it was Lord Elgin's fate to be the first to do this.

Before he had been in Canada a year there were general elections, and the result was satisfactory to those who wished to see the French acquire their share of political power. The English-speaking Liberals, allied with the French Canadians, now had a large majority in the Parliament of Canada. It had been a maxim of the extreme English side that to know a man to be a "rebel" you need only know that he was French; and they saw that now, should the Canadian Parliament be supreme, a majority composed



chiefly of the French, or, in other words, of "rebels," would rule the country. On March 4, 1848, the Tory cabinet of Sir Allan McNab resigned, and six days later M. La Fontaine, the French leader, accepted office as Prime Minister of Canada in alliance with Mr. Robert Baldwin, the English Liberal leader. It only remained to be seen whether Lord Elgin would have the courage in the face of possible clamour to adhere to the principles of Lord Durham, which he had laid down for himself, and let the majority control the state. He saw the futility of trying to force the English point of view upon the French Canadians. "You will never Anglicize the French inhabitants of the province," he said; "let them feel, on the other hand, that their religion, their habits, their prepossessions, their prejudices if you will, are more considered and respected here than in other portions of this vast continent, who will venture to say that the last hand which waves the British flag on American ground may not be that of a French Canadian." He delighted them, in 1849, by reading his opening speech to Parliament, not only in English, but in French. When some of the British element abused him for his conciliatory attitude, his answer was: "You are playing my game; I want to win the confidence of the French Canadians, but they are touchy and suspicious, as men who feel that they are inferior and believe that they are oppressed invariably are, . . . but if you continue for a year to act as



you are now acting, denouncing me as your enemy and their friend, you will end by convincing them that I am to be trusted and I shall win the day."

But he was soon face to face with acute trouble. During the rebellion of 1837 and 1838 much property had been destroyed. Those burning villages, the landscape darkened with the smoke of a desolated countryside, did not indicate only the just punishment of rebellious treason. In the ruthless destruction by the victorious party, as we have seen, the property of loyal men had been sacrificed, and when peace was restored these claimed that redress was due as well to them as to those who had lost at the hands of the rebels themselves. There were difficulties and delays in the way of settlement, but, in 1841, the Canadian Parliament had dealt with claims for redress in Upper Canada, and the application in time of like principles to the French province was inevitable. To this, in 1845, the Tory party had committed itself definitely. But the matter dragged on, and, in 1848, when they went out of office, nothing final had been done. If the Tories were committed to a settlement in the French province, much more was the party which now secured power and especially represented the French interest. The sum involved was not large—£100,000 would probably have met all the claims. But since Frenchmen were to be compensated, it was easy to raise the cry that the Government was about to reward rebels for their disloyalty.



Bitter clamour broke out. Dr. Wolfred Nelson had been one of the leaders of the revolt ; the wit of the time described him as Dr. " Well-fed " Nelson, who was to receive for his treason a reward of £15,000 from the public treasury. That no one who had joined in rebellion should receive any indemnity the Bill expressly provided, but the Government apparently did not lay sufficient emphasis upon this, and not a few really believed that M. La Fontaine was prepared to reward the French Canadians for rebelling against Great Britain. Early in 1849 a Bill to appropriate £90,000 for rebellion losses in Lower Canada was introduced by the Government. From the first Lord Elgin seems to have been clear as to his course. He was not convinced of the wisdom of the measure in itself, but he held that it was quite within the powers of the Canadian Parliament, and if it passed he was resolved to give his own assent. So weak was independent political life in Canada that the Opposition urged the Governor to reserve the Bill and refer it to London, rather than accept a measure certain to pass the Canadian Parliament. But the Bill indemnifying the losers in Upper Canada had not been so reserved, and Lord Elgin was determined not to discriminate against a measure merely because it had the support of the French element. By a vote of 47 to 18 the Act passed, there being in the majority many members of British descent.

On the afternoon of April 25, 1849, Lord





### "REBELLION LOSSES"

(THE PICTURE ILLUSTRATES THE CONTEMPT OF THE ENGLISH FOR THE "HABITANTS." MR. LA FONTAINE IS SCATTERING GOLD AMONG THEM; THE "HABITANT" IN THE FOREGROUND IS HOLDING UP A BAG OF MONEY, COMPENSATION FOR THE LOSS OF HIS WIFE (REBELLION LOSSES), WHEN HE WOULD HAVE SOLD HER "FOR TWO DOLLARE")







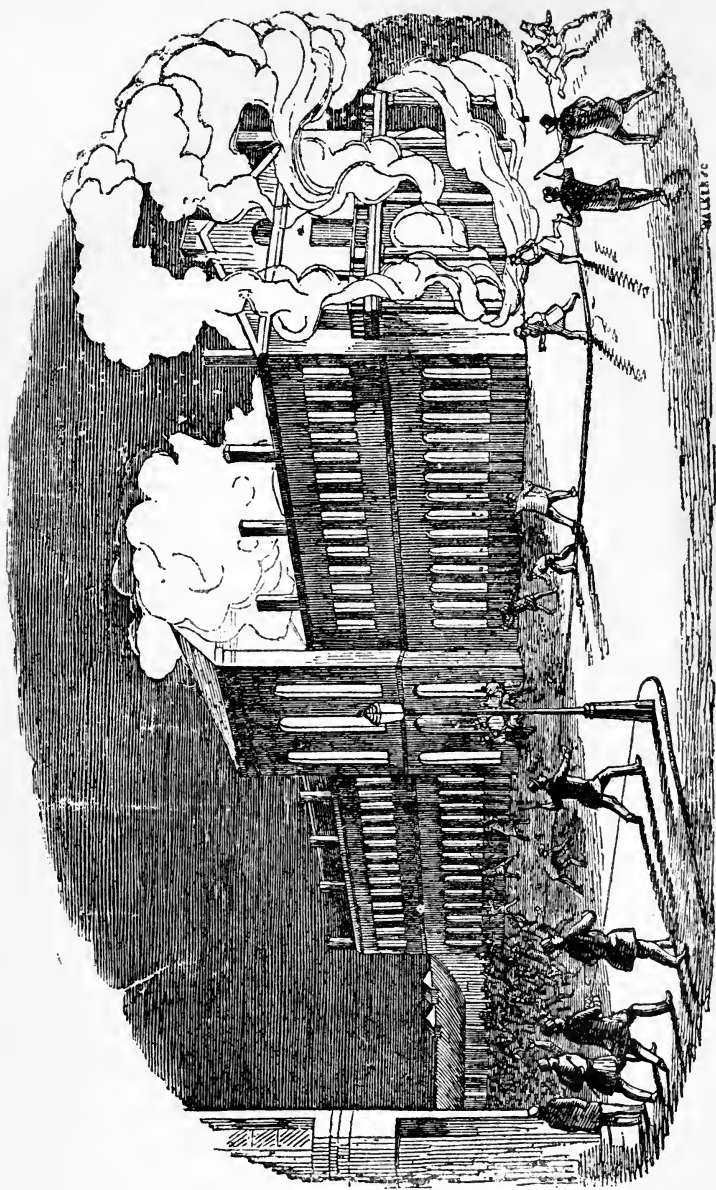
Elgin drove from Monklands to the House of Parliament in Montreal for the formal duty of giving the royal assent to the Bills duly enacted. It was about five o'clock when he entered the chamber. After he had taken his seat on the throne, one official read aloud the title of each Bill, and another signified the royal assent with all due formality. That the Rebellion Losses Bill would be not assented to, but reserved for consideration by the home Government, the Opposition had fully persuaded themselves. But it appeared among the Bills now to be finally enacted. When the clerk read out the title, "An act to provide for the indemnification of parties in Lower Canada whose property was destroyed during the rebellion in the years 1837 and 1838," there was a dead silence in the chamber; for a moment people held their breath; then with stamping of feet and groans a good many of the audience made for the door. As they passed out of the building milder disapproval changed to yells and hootings. Before the Parliament House a crowd quickly gathered; as the result of prolonged discussion of the issue, feeling was high, and it shows the slight grasp by many Canadians of the principles of their own institutions, and their own right of self-government, that anger was chiefly directed not against the responsible members who had put the Bill through, but against the representative of the Crown.

At about six o'clock, his business completed,



Lord Elgin prepared to leave the Parliament House. But no sooner did he appear, than with a shout the mob attacked him. In the short walk of a hundred yards to his carriage he was pelted by rotten eggs, one of which struck him in the face, while others covered his clothing. His footmen, his horses, his equipage were all reached by the unsavoury missiles, and he drove away amid curses and yells, and a shower of mud and stones. By seven o'clock Montreal was in a state of huge excitement. The alarm bells rang, and criers went through the streets calling a public meeting in the Champ de Mars at eight o'clock. At this stage it would not have been difficult for even a small police force to check the disorder, but, fearing no serious danger, the Government did not take preventive measures; they swore in no special constables, with the result that the more violent elements in the mob soon got the upper hand. At the meeting the shout went up, "We have passed resolutions enough; the time for action has arrived." The House was holding an evening session in the Parliament Buildings, and thither about nine o'clock the crowd rushed. The brilliantly lighted windows were a tempting target, and a hail of stones soon crashed in among the members. At once all was confusion. It was comparatively few who did the work of violence; the crowd, not yet very large, merely looked on while the rioters rushed into the building. To their





DESTRUCTION OF THE PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS AT MONTREAL







advance there seems to have been little opposition, and they quickly drove the members from their places. One rioter removed the mace from the table; a man with a broken nose took the speaker's chair, and with mock Cromwellian majesty said solemnly, "I dissolve this House."

Probably the mob had no definite plan, but whether by accident or design the building soon took fire. It contained two libraries of great value, and a huge mass of public records. So rapidly did the fire spread that within a quarter of an hour the building was a mass of flames and little was saved; Sir Allan McNab and other members who tried to rescue some books barely escaped with the aid of ladders. It was believed for a time that some of the French members, taking refuge in the cellars, had been burned to death, and the crowd greeted this announcement with savage cheers. When the roof of the central building fell in with a great crash, "the sight," says an eye-witness, "became awfully and magnificently beautiful. The night was clear and cold, and the high wind lashed the flames to maddening fury." By eleven o'clock the destruction was complete, and the crowd dispersed. Some were in a mood of jesting exultation, and made witticisms about a warm and sudden dissolution of Parliament as effective as Cromwell's expulsion of the Long Parliament. But not a few already regretted the reign of a brutal lawlessness that had hardly dared to raise its



head with such results in a British community since the days of the Gordon riots. That there was no bloodshed was indeed a wonder. In Montreal and its neighbourhood were many French; it was against them that all this violence was directed, and they might well have retorted in kind with fatal results.

The next day, undismayed by violence, the Government of M. La Fontaine ordered the arrest of four leaders in the riot. While Sir Allan McNab attacked the ministers fiercely for inducing Lord Elgin to "sneak down to the House" to discharge the duty of assenting to the Bill, the Conservative leader at the same time condemned and discouraged violence. For the moment, however, the mob was out of hand, and even the soldiery in Montreal—British regulars—joined in the scoffs and jeers against the French party. When in revenge for the arrest of the leaders the mob deliberately sacked M. La Fontaine's house, smashed the furniture, ripped up the feather-beds, and set on fire the outbuildings, they gave three cheers for the soldiery who had watched a part of their proceedings. But the chief victim of hostility was Lord Elgin himself. He was either patron or member of a good many societies in Montreal, and those of Scottish origin were especially enraged. The Thistle Society met and resolved to remove his name as patron; the St. Andrew's Society erased his name from the roll of members,



and, carrying resentment to the point of self-sacrifice, they resolved to return his Excellency's subscription of £10, with interest from the date of payment; at the same time, since cash was scarce, he was to be repaid in a debenture redeemable at some future date. "It has already been decided," said one writer for the press, "that safety and peace can only be ensured by his Excellency going home. Notice will be given him to quit the confines of Canada before the expiration of the week. Sir Benjamin D'Urban [the Commander-in-Chief of the Forces] is to be called upon to administer the affairs of the country." Another paper, addressing Lord Elgin, said, "Every moment you remain costs your royal mistress the affection of one of her subjects, and unless you wish your name to go down to posterity as—the fool that lost the Canadas—'Go home.'"

This type of resentment is well fitted to provoke a smile, but Lord Elgin had more serious dangers to face. The Legislature voted an address of loyalty and thanks to him for his conduct, and to receive this he drove, on April 30, from Monklands to Government House in Montreal. On the way, though he had an escort of dragoons, he was pelted with stones, and narrowly escaped injury. A huge stone struck him in the chest; had it struck him in the head, as his assailant no doubt intended, the blow might well have proved fatal. When he returned to Monklands even worse happened. To avoid trouble



he went by an unexpected route, and so gained something on his assailants, but they pursued him in what vehicles they could secure. Every panel in his carriage was driven in by missiles,\* and his brother, Colonel Bruce, and others surrounding him, were injured. Even on Monklands itself there was danger of an attack, and Lord Elgin's party organized the defences and prepared to stand a siege.† In Montreal the rioting lasted for some days. The ministers dared not appear in the streets. Some of the ladies of Lord Elgin's household driving to church were insulted. Although Montreal was a city of 50,000 inhabitants, its police consisted of two in the service of the Government and seventy in the service of the city, and could not grapple with the disorder.

Though in time the forces of order rallied, there was renewed trouble when rioters again attacked at night the residence of M. La Fontaine. They were fired on from the house, and one man was killed. The cry arose that the blood of a Saxon had been shed by a Frenchman ; the press broke out into furious attacks on the Minister ;

\* Lord Elgin would not permit the carriage to be repaired, and years after he used it with its gaping cracks and splits to proceed to the opening of Parliament at Quebec—"lest we forget." He did indeed forget. On the eve of his departure from Canada, a farewell banquet, marked by great heartiness, was given to him at Montreal. In his speech he said, "I shall forget, but no—what I might have had to forget is forgotten already, and, therefore, I cannot tell what I shall forget."

† It was just at this time that Lord Elgin's eldest son was born.



the funeral was made the occasion of a great demonstration. Lord Elgin was urged to proclaim martial law and to crush disorder by military measures. But this he would not do ; he insisted that the city authorities had not yet done their utmost, and that they must preserve order. By this time all respectable classes had come to see that the lawless element must be checked. Many citizens consented to be sworn in as special constables to patrol the streets, and when after careful trial a jury acquitted M. La Fontaine of any blame in connection with the death before his house, the path to peace was clear. But the incident had revealed the hidden fires that may suddenly flame forth in the most unlikely community.

These days were the testing time, not only of Lord Elgin's insight and courage, but also of the system which he was resolved to support in Canada. Had he yielded to fanatical clamour and refused to accept the decision of Parliament, he would have reasserted what so many Governors had before declared, that in Canada the authority of the Crown, or rather of the Colonial Secretary, may over-ride the expressed mandate of the people. He saw what was involved, and he held steadily to the course that reason dictated and that time was to justify. In those riotous days the victory of self-government in Canada was finally won—a victory that proved of world-wide moment ; Australia, New Zealand, and South



Africa soon asserted the same complete independence in the control of their own affairs.

But to establish the precedent in Canada great strength of character was necessary. For weeks Lord Elgin remained quietly at Monklands, and many said that timidity and cowardice inspired his passive acceptance of the measures of his Ministry. "He shut himself up in his own particular cell of Monklands instead of riding into town every day and doing his duty," was Sir Allan McNab, the Tory leader's, censure upon the Governor's conduct.\* Satire and abuse were poured out against him with a violence that politicians in Canada would hardly now use against each other. His claim of impartiality and aloofness from the faction fight was especially assailed. "Punch in Canada" (the very name shows the lack as yet of independent thought in the country) addressed him thus—

"Proud Earl, who boast yourself the heir  
Of Robert Bruce, a patriot rare,  
Though genealogists declare,  
You're not so in reality ;

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\* An American said to him at a later time, "We thought you were right, but we could not understand why you did not shoot them down." Violent methods are too readily adopted in the republic, but a Canadian statesman said to him, "I own that I would have reduced Montreal to ashes before I would have endured half what you did, and I should have been justified too." "Yes," replied Lord Elgin, "you would have been justified because your course would have been perfectly defensible ; but it would not have been the best course. Mine was a better one."





"THE HERMIT"

(LORD ELGIN HAS RETIRED FROM THE WORLD TO MONKLANDS)



TO THE  
AMERICAN



If your descent indeed be such,  
 You have *descended* very much,  
 Attend while Punch presumes to touch  
 On 'dignified neutrality.'

"Grey's nepotism sent you here,  
 Merely it seems that you might clear  
 About five thousand pounds a year,  
     By dint of Scotch frugality ;  
 For this you have become the tool  
 Of Frenchmen whom you ought to rule,  
 And then the country to befool  
     Boast 'dignified neutrality.'"

At a supposed masked ball Mr. Hincks, one of the leaders on the Liberal side, was "disguised as a gentleman of the nineteenth century and Lord Elgin as his shadow." Another wit declared that Lord Elgin had lost his reason, and that on this account his keeper, the head of the Ministry, must now act for him :

"Notice is hereby given to all whom it may in any way concern, that James Bruce, who, under the influence of severe mental aberration, has been guilty of some incendiary acts and has circulated certain incoherent sayings, in which a mingling together of spiders and Robert Bruce, Rebel Losses and William Wallace, has rendered his unhappy hallucinations painfully prominent, has been placed under the charge of the keeper of the Côte du Neige pike by his afflicted relatives. This precaution has been taken in order that his movements and productions may be under the government and inspection of a trustworthy guardian, and the



public are therefore warned not to pay any attention to letters or answers they may receive from him unless countersigned or approved by that gentleman."

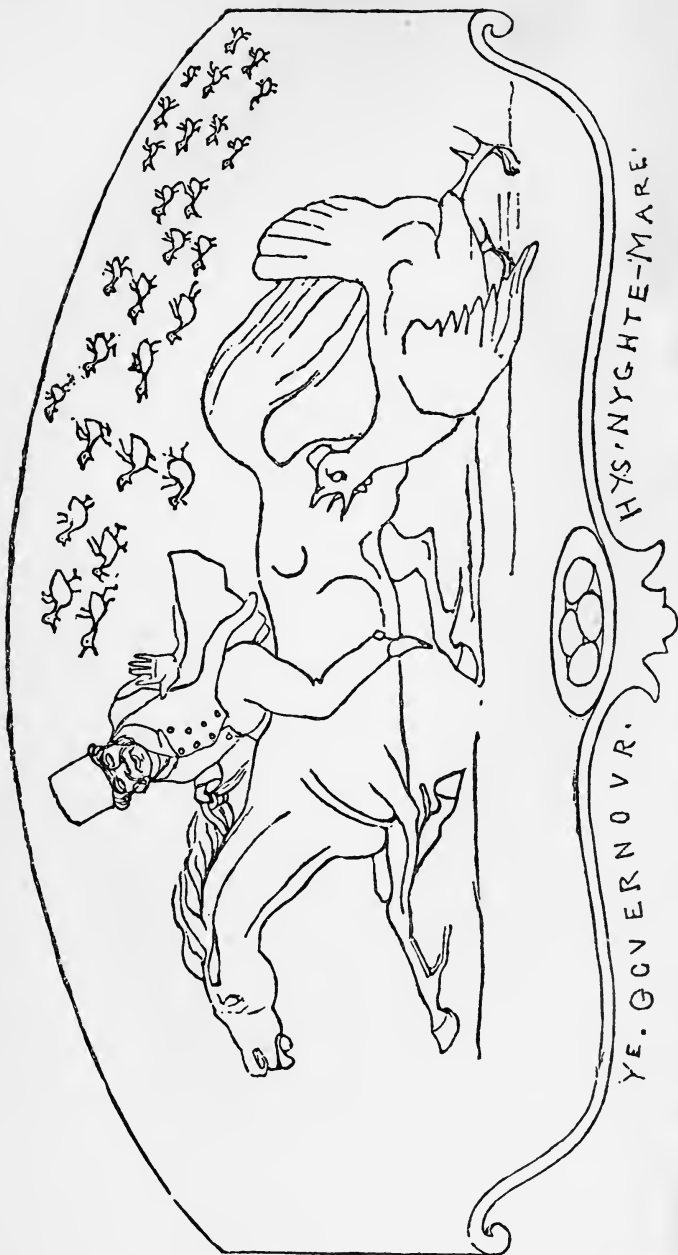
The pelting with rotten eggs and the subsequent remaining in seclusion at Monklands were delightful morsels for satire. One of the maids at Monklands writes thus to a friend—

"You've read, my dear,  
Vot horrid kickups happened here ;  
Oh ! Mary love, you would have melted,  
To see our John and Joseph pelted ;  
Two new coats and bright new plushes  
Is spiled with mud and filthy slushes ;  
It's quite enough, my dear, to sicken  
Any one of eating chicken."

"Arrangements are now in progress for fortifying Monklands," says another satirist, "so as to convert it into a castle of refuge during the remainder of Lord Elgin's sojourn in the colony. Plates of iron—egg proof—have already been ordered for the windows, and the chamber-maids have been doubled on the principal landings of the stairs, and at night the vice-royal chest of drawers is run out, and placed against the interior of the door of his lordship's sleeping apartment, surrounded by the washhand-stand with its appendages, so that in case of a surprise the crash of the crockery would at once give the alarm and bring up the butler—or warder, as he is henceforth to be called—to the rescue."

Serious action to impeach Lord Elgin was





YE GOVERNOR.

HYS-NYGHTE-MARE.

"A LAVE OF EGGS"







proposed, and a British North American League came into existence at this time, with its avowed object "to drive the French into the sea." The tone of those who assailed him is really significant. It shows the strong forces that he had to oppose; it shows, too, that his line of conduct by removing the Governor's office from the arena of faction was to save its dignity and strength. And it is not without interest that in a great British colony some fifty years ago a powerful party was ready to heap odium upon the Governor because he accepted with logical completeness the principle of colonial self-government.

The disorders cost Montreal something. Members of the Parliament declared that they would never return to a city where such disgraceful proceedings were possible, and in Montreal a Canadian Parliament has not since assembled. Henceforth the meetings were to alternate between Toronto and Quebec. Though in earlier days the precedent had been set in England of a Parliament similarly migratory, it was a cumbrous and expensive business to transport every three or four years the *impedimenta* of government some 500 miles from one to the other capital, and, after trying it once or twice, a new and permanent capital at Ottawa was selected by the Queen at the request of the Canadian Parliament. Montreal was permanently discrowned, as a result of the ferocity of her factions.

It has happened more than once that, when



Canada is in trouble, the thoughts of some turn to annexation to the United States as a possible relief. Lord Elgin was always alive to the commercial advantage which Canada would secure if she joined the American Union, and he felt that, were Canadian discontent fostered by unwise measures, the movement for annexation would be irresistible. But even he was surprised when members of the Tory party, the party of traditional loyalty, took up the annexation cry. It shows again how weak was political life in Canada, that rage at defeat should have led to such a break with all that the party had stood for in the past. A manifesto declaring for annexation was issued by a good many prominent persons, some of them in the employ of the Government. Lord Elgin promptly showed that his previous conduct had not been inspired by irresolution. To each of the officials whose names were attached to the document he sent a circular to ask if the signature appeared with his consent. Some repudiated the manifesto; some defiantly said "Yes;" some refused to answer. All who would not disavow the sentiments of the manifesto were dismissed from the public service. Lord John Russell took strong ground against the annexationists; Lord Grey, the Colonial Secretary, gave Lord Elgin cordial support, and as a proof of the royal confidence he was at this time made a peer of the United Kingdom.

Resolute as was Lord Elgin against the



annexation of Canada to the United States, he yet had a haunting fear that this would some day come about. The best way to prevent it, he thought, was to ease Canada's commercial situation. He saw how severe was the treatment she had just received from the mother country. Before England adopted Free Trade Canada enjoyed extensive favours in the British markets. Timber, one of her great products, was charged only a fraction of the duty paid by foreign countries; and her other staple product, corn, was singled out for peculiar consideration. In 1843 Lord Stanley passed the Canadian Corn Act, under which wheat and flour from Canada paid in duty only about one-fifth of what these articles paid when imported from other countries. With this advantage Canada began to build up a great corn trade. Since even American wheat, if ground in Canada, secured the privilege, much wheat began to cross the border-line. To develop the trade Canadians embarked upon the construction of extensive flour-mills, and upon the improvement of canals and warehouses, and in these enterprises they employed the available capital of the country. But no sooner had they begun, than, a few years after it was granted, the preference of 1843 was taken away by the repeal of the Corn Laws. The consequence was something like ruin to Canada. Its capital was tied up in fruitless enterprises. In the British market the Americans were now on the same footing as the Canadians,



and, with superior facilities, they secured the bulk of the trade which Canada had hoped to enjoy. At the same time, the old Navigation Laws, still in force, secured for British ships as against the foreigners a monopoly of the colonial carrying trade. In this indeed there was a compensating advantage, for, since Canadian ships ranked as British, they enjoyed privileges chiefly in connection with the West Indian trade. But, on the other hand, Canada's freedom of intercourse with foreign countries was restricted, and, with accumulated hardships, there is little wonder that, in 1849, Canada's commercial life was paralyzed. Real estate proved unsalable; her rivers and canals lay unused, and signs of decay were everywhere. With three-fourths of her merchants ruined, money was so scarce that even the Governor-General's salary was paid in debentures.

It is hardly surprising that even sober business men cried out for union with the United States. The older British Empire had been held together, in large degree, by community of trade interests, and now Free Trade had profoundly altered the whole colonial problem. Lord Elgin had to ask himself if the mother country could retain the colonies without the special trade privileges that they had long enjoyed, without the solidarity of interest that the old balance of restriction and privilege had involved. "There was something very captivating," he wrote to Lord Grey, the



Colonial Secretary, "in the project of forming all the parts of this vast British Empire into one huge *zollverein*, with free interchange of commodities and uniform duties against the world without ; though without some federal legislation it might have been impossible to carry it out. Undoubtedly under such a system the component parts of the empire would have been united by bonds which cannot be supplied under that on which we are now entering." But he thought that in 1846 the die was already cast, and he was not sanguine that under Free Trade Canada would remain British territory. With no very substantial interest in peril by a change of political *status*, he feared that differences between the Imperial and the Canadian Parliament might be magnified for party purposes so as to imperil the tie. His remedy for this was chivalrous, if not very substantial. It was to let the Governor act more fully upon his own responsibility, and then if, through his acts, trouble came, the Home Government could sacrifice him in the interests of peace. He under-estimated, as too many underestimate, the real bond between Canada and Britain, which is the intangible, indefinable, but still immensely strong one, of unity in outlook, aims, and institutions, to be dissolved only by a cataclysm.

In 1849 Great Britain repealed the Navigation Acts, the last remnant of Imperial control over Canada's commerce. Already the Canadian



Parliament had raised the duty on British manufactures from 5 to  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and reduced to this rate duties of  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. previously levied against the United States. In the Canadian markets henceforth, until 1897, the British took their chances with other competitors. The next problem was to enlarge Canada's markets. For want of an accessible market the Canadian farmer was getting from ninepence to a shilling less for his wheat than was his American neighbour. It was a customs barrier that handicapped him, and, naturally, he longed for the right to sell his produce in the United States. Only a few in Canada ever had any serious thought of changing their political *status* in order to enjoy Free Trade with the United States; no matter what pessimists may say, in the Western world national feeling has usually risen superior to the mere hope of profit. The Canadians wanted reciprocity in trade; and this Lord Elgin was resolved to give them. The problem was one for the United States finally to solve. There reciprocity had long been discussed, but while some sections, especially New England and the South, were friendly to the project, the farmers of the Northern States dreaded the increased competition which it would involve. For favouring reciprocity the South had a political reason. The opposing forces were beginning to measure their strength for the coming civil war, and the South dreaded any prospect of the annexation of Canada, for if



the British provinces entered the Union, they would do so as free states, and thus fortify enormously the side opposed to slavery. In consequence, the South wished for the settlement of the Canadian question on the basis of reciprocity in trade rather than in that of annexation.

After Canada had taken the first steps towards better relations by reducing her tariff on manufactured articles, and by ceasing to discriminate against the United States in favour of Great Britain, bills looking to reciprocity were introduced from time to time in the American Congress. But little attention was paid to them, and they never came up for serious consideration. The general feeling was that Canada had nothing to offer which would in any way balance the immense boon of access to the American markets. Events, however, aided Lord Elgin's hopes. There was a long dispute between Canada and the United States as to the American right of fishing in Canadian waters. Under the treaty of 1818 the Americans might fish within three miles of the Canadian shore, but the Canadians claimed that the shore line was to be drawn from headland to headland, and took strong steps to exclude the Americans from the numerous bays and inlets where alone the herring and mackerel fishing could be carried on profitably and safely. Though the Americans asserted that they had the right of access to the inlets, the Canadians obstinately resisted this interpretation; somewhat reluctantly



the British Government supported them, and in 1852 trouble was imminent. When the British provinces sent six well-armed cruisers to enforce their right to exclude the Americans from the bays, the United States in turn sent Commodore Perry, soon to become famous by his expedition to Japan, that he might protect the rights of the Americans. On both sides war was talked of as possible, and the need of settlement was becoming acute. The Americans cared little for reciprocity, but wanted fishing privileges ; the Canadians were ready to yield on the fisheries question if they got reciprocity. But though President Fillmore, in his message to Congress in 1852, urged the making of a treaty to settle the whole question, no political party was ready to take up reciprocity as a leading issue, no interests were so vitally concerned as to make a powerful lobby, and successive efforts failed for lack of organized support.

Lord Elgin had meditated profoundly on all the bearings of the question, and on its relation to the destiny of Canada. The question he thought of vast moment for the future. "If . . . reciprocal trade with the Union be not secured for us, the worst, I fear, will come, and that at no distant day." "The worst," in his mind, was Canada's union with the United States. "The Americans are," he said, "your own kindred ; a flourishing, swaggering people, who are ready to make room for you at their own table, to give you a share of



all they possess, of all their prosperity, and to guarantee you in all time to come against the risk of invasion, or the need of defences, if you will but speak the word."

Since the question had remained long unsettled, Lord Elgin, when his term of office in Canada was drawing to a close, resolved, after six years of failure, to try his own hand at diplomacy at Washington. In the early months of 1854 he was in England, and many thought would not return to Canada, but he really went to gather force for a new effort. The Ministry in London gave him full power to treat with the United States on behalf of all the North American provinces. He found an attractive secretary to his mission in the person of a rising young writer and diplomatist, Mr. Lawrence Oliphant, and in May, 1854, he arrived in Washington with a considerable suite, which included Mr. Hincks, who had succeeded M. La Fontaine as Prime Minister of Canada, Colonel Bruce, Lord Elgin's brother, Oliphant, and a few others. It was an exciting time at Washington. On the day of Lord Elgin's arrival, Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, which permitted the extension of slavery to new regions in the West, and left but a fragment of that territory free. No more important measure was ever debated in a free assembly. Civil war hung in the balance, and public feeling was so high that men sat in Congress armed to the teeth.



"We found," says Oliphant, "the excitement so great upon our arrival in Washington in the afternoon that, after a hurried meal, we went to the Capitol to see the vote taken. I shall never forget the scene presented by the House. The galleries were crammed with spectators largely composed of ladies, and the vacant places on the floor of the House crowded with visitors. The final vote was taken amid great enthusiasm, a hundred guns being fired in celebration of an event which, to those endowed with foresight, could not be called auspicious. I remember a few nights afterwards meeting a certain Senator Toombs at a large dinner given by one of the most prominent members of Congress—who has since filled the office of Secretary of State—in Lord Elgin's honour. It was a grand banquet, at which all the guests were men, with the exception of the wife of our host. He himself belonged to the Republican, or, as it was then more generally called, the Whig party. Notwithstanding the divergence of public opinion among many of those present, the merits of the all-absorbing measure, and its probable effects upon the destinies of the nation, were being freely discussed. Senator Toombs, a violent Democrat, was a large, pompous man, with a tendency, not uncommon among American politicians, to 'orate' rather than to converse in society. He waited for a pause in the discussion, and then, addressing Lord Elgin in stentorian tones, remarked, *à propos* of the engrossing topic, 'Yes, my lord, we are about to relume the torch of liberty upon the altar of slavery.' Upon which our hostess, with a winning smile, and in the most silvery accents



imaginable, said, 'Oh, I am so glad to hear you say that again, senator ; for I told my husband you had made use of exactly the same expression to me yesterday, and he said you would not have talked such nonsense to anybody but a woman.' "

An English peer always attracts attention and consideration in American society, and Lord Elgin was immediately a conspicuous figure. "Lord Elgin is a short, stout gentleman," said a Washington newspaper, "on the shady side of forty, and is decidedly John Bullish in walk, talk, appearance, and carriage. His face, although round and full, beams with intellect, good feeling, and good humour. His manners are open, frank, and amusing." When he consulted Mr. Marcy, the Secretary of State, upon the prospects of a treaty, that gentleman said the great obstacle was in the Democratic majority in the Senate. If a sufficient number of Democratic senators could be induced to support reciprocity, the administration would raise no difficulties. Then Lord Elgin showed himself a born diplomatist. He entered upon a round of festivity, seemingly careless, but always directed towards a definite end. One day his ingenuous secretary, who was wearing himself out with lunches, dinners, and receptions, remarked innocently—

"I find all my most intimate friends are Democratic senators."

"So do I," said Lord Elgin, dryly.

Had there been in the United States any



serious feeling against the treaty, the direct canvassing by a foreigner for votes in the Senate would have been resented. But most of those who had thought at all about the treaty were anxious to get at least the fishery question settled, and Lord Elgin's diplomacy went on unchecked. The Democratic senators were captivated by his social qualities, and his capacity for repartee and racy anecdote. There seemed in him nothing of the haughty reserve which the novelists, at least, are sure that the English peer always maintains. He sat long at table with his new friends, and, if we may believe Oliphant, they drank vast quantities of liquor ; at one feast there was a vessel of champagne on the table in which "you might have drowned a baby," and Lord Elgin, who abhorred even smoking, seemed to hold his own at these feasts ; seemed, for his watchful secretary thought that he really drank not more than one glass during a whole evening. American hospitality was boundless, and Lord Elgin must have been making his way pretty rapidly into the confidences of his friends in Washington when, after a great banquet, we find him going at midnight with a party of revellers to a popular senator's house. The good man was in bed, but his trusting friends routed him out. He came to the door wearing only a short nightshirt. "All right, boys," he said to the Governor-General of Canada and his companions, "you go in, and I'll go down and get the drink."



The "boys" went in, and soon the host, still in his nightshirt, reappeared with his arms full of bottles of champagne, on the top of which were two large lumps of ice. He had quick wit and a kind heart. "Dear old gentleman," says Oliphant, "he had the merit of being quite sober, which some of the others of the party were not."

Much has been said about Lord Elgin's social efforts, and American writers have charged that he deliberately debauched their countrymen by his festivities, and floated the treaty through on champagne. For these opinions the basis, the sole basis, is Oliphant's narrative. It is piquant enough, but we should remember that Oliphant was a satirist and the author of satirical novels. His account of Washington society can hardly be regarded as striking the fine balance of justice to those with whom Lord Elgin was negotiating, and we may fairly assume that a few glasses of champagne would have little effect upon the convictions of the acute and hard-headed senators. The watchful young secretary seized, and probably exaggerated, every peculiarity of manners. Washington itself did not please him. We realize what changes time brings when we find the American capital described in 1854 as "a howling wilderness of deserted streets running out into the country and ending nowhere, its population consisting chiefly of politicians and negroes."

Mr. Marcy, the Secretary of State, with whom Lord Elgin had chiefly to deal, came in for some



of Oliphant's satirical touches, but his critic was obliged to admit the masterful ability of the author of the famous phrase in American politics, that made office the reward of devotion, "To the victors belong the spoils."

"He is now Secretary of State ; before that, he was a judge of the Supreme Court ; before that, a general in the Army ; before that, governor of a state ; before that, Secretary of War ; before that, Minister in Mexico ; before that, a member of the House of Representatives ; before that, a politician ; before that, a cabinet-maker. He ends, as he began, with cabinet work ; and he is not, at his time of life, and with his varied experiences, afraid either of the wrath of his countrymen or the wiles of an English lord."

Assisted ably by Sir Philip Crompton, the British Ambassador at Washington, Lord Elgin effected his end with almost startling rapidity. Ten days after his arrival he told Mr. Marcy, to his amazement, that the Democratic majority of the Senate was favourable to the proposed treaty. "Mr. Marcy," says Oliphant, "could scarcely believe his ears, and was so much taken aback that I somewhat doubted the desire to make the treaty which he so strongly expressed on the occasion of Lord Elgin's first interview with him, when he also pronounced it hopeless." Oliphant has described in mock-heroic style the final signing of the treaty. It was late at night, and in the dimly lighted and spacious chamber



there were only Lord Elgin and Mr. Marcy, each with a secretary. Lord Elgin read the treaty aloud. It was checked by the secretaries, and "the aged man [Mr. Marcy] listens, while he picks his teeth with a pair of scissors, or cleans out the wick of a candle with their points, which he afterwards wipes on his grey hair." The signatures were attached just after midnight, and, adds Oliphant, "There is something strangely mysterious and suggestive in the scratching of that midnight pen, for it may be scratching fortune or ruin to toiling millions. . . . I retire to dream of its contents, and to listen in my troubled sleep to the perpetually recurring refrain of the three impressive words with which the pregnant document concludes, 'Unmanufactured tobacco, rags.'"

To the Americans was secured by the treaty what they chiefly desired—fishing rights in the bays and inlets of the coasts of Canada and the Maritime Provinces, though not in Canadian fresh water; they were also to have the use of the Canadian canals. What Canada desired, a market for her natural products, she also gained; in the named articles there was to be complete reciprocity. The treaty did not cover manufactures, though this the United States much desired. It was, indeed, said, on behalf of Canada, that reciprocity in manufactures could readily be secured later; but the problem was more difficult than it seemed. Reciprocity in natural products involved no discrimination against Great Britain, for she, too,



might send the same commodities to Canada without duty. On a similar basis, if Canada admitted American manufactures free, she must do the same with those of Great Britain, who also gave her an open market, and such a step would cut off Canada's chief source of revenue.

Though the advantages were many, the compact, which was to continue for ten years and then to end after one year's notice from either side, was terminated by the United States at the earliest possible moment. The reasons were various. Canada, spending great sums on new railways, needed further revenues, and, soon after the treaty was concluded, increased her duties on manufactured goods. American manufacturers claimed that this involved discrimination against them, and that the spirit, if not the letter, of the treaty was violated; as a matter of fact, their exports to Canada of manufactured articles soon fell off. Transportation interests in the United States were also alarmed by the efforts of Canada to divert traffic from the United States to her own channels of commerce; the American farmer found his own home market invaded by Canadian rivals; and so on through the whole course of protectionist argument, which remained undaunted by the fact that Canada's imports from the United States always far exceeded her exports to that country. It was the events of the Civil War that furnished the most effective arguments against the treaty. Bitter antagonism to Great Britain



grew up in the United States, for the English press did not disguise its sympathy for the South. When the *Trent* affair took place in 1861, the British Government sent a menacing force to Canada ; irritation was further increased when a band of southern filibusters used Canada as the basis of an armed invasion of Vermont. All this worked upon the public mind in the United States, and made the nation eager to hit back. Since Britain had favoured American disruption, it was hoped to effect her own undoing by denying reciprocity to Canada, and thus forcing her through self-interest to abandon Great Britain and enter the Union. Some sanguine prophets said that Canada would join the United States within two years after the treaty terminated ; in 1866 a Bill was read twice in the House of Representatives at Washington for admitting the states of Canada East, Canada West, Nova Scotia, etc. In these premature plans the American Government had no share, and perhaps its chief reason for abrogating the treaty was the need of revenue. With an enormous debt, the United States had to tax heavily every class, including the farmers. These complained that, bearing as they did a great burden, they were subject to unlimited competition from the untaxed Canadian farmer, and by duties their Government tried to make the Canadians pay their share.

So in 1866 reciprocity, long hoped for, and at last won, by Lord Elgin, came to an end,



and no subsequent efforts to renew it have succeeded. But the treaty played an important part in the political life of Canada. When its abrogation was announced, the danger to Canada's existing *status* was one of the rallying cries for confederating the British provinces. "I am in favour of a union of these provinces," said Mr. George Brown, a leader in the Canadian Parliament, "because it will enable us to meet without alarm the abrogation of the American Reciprocity Treaty." The Dominion of Canada owes its existence in some degree to the effects of Lord Elgin's treaty.

On his return to Canada, Lord Elgin made something like a triumphal progress from Boston to Quebec. His term of office was now drawing to a close, but it was destined that his last days in Canada should be stirring. The party that had soothed the French, and under which Canada had now become prosperous, was losing its hold upon the country. At Quebec, in June, 1854, the Ministers were defeated in the debate on the Address; but, instead of resigning, they resolved to prorogue the House, and to appeal to the country. When the House assembled on June 22, the roar of guns announced that Lord Elgin had left Government House to give official effect to the prorogation. To the course about to be pursued the Opposition objected. They thought the Government should either resign or attempt to put some of their proposed measures through



the House which had just assembled. When "Black Rod" knocked at the door of the Commons to summon the members to the Governor's presence, the dispute was going on; he was for a time denied admission, and during an hour Lord Elgin sat in embarrassed expectancy in the Chamber of the Upper House waiting for the Commons to appear; when they did come, the Speaker read a formal protest against proroguing the House before it could despatch any business.

None the less was the Parliament dissolved, the Governor, amidst much clamour, accepting resolutely the advice of his Ministers in this respect. But in the election the Government was not sustained. While French Canada remained true to its Liberalism, in Upper Canada the Reform party was overthrown. It was by a fine irony of fate that Lord Elgin had now to call upon, to form a Ministry, Sir Allan McNab, the Tory leader, who had so roundly abused him in connection with the Rebellion Losses Bill. But the Governor could at least show his impartiality, and in the end he left Canada as he had found it, with Sir Allan McNab at the head of the Government; and in the Cabinet sat with the Tory leader some of the men whom he had denounced as "rebels" in 1849.

In the autumn of 1854 Lord Elgin made a farewell tour through Canada, and saw everywhere signs of the new life which the country was beginning to feel. Even before reciprocity with



the United States went into effect, Canada was showing that she contained within herself the capacity for a great revival. It was the era of the railway. When Lord Elgin arrived in Canada in 1847, there were but 22 miles of railway in the country. When he left, in 1854, there were 790 miles, and no less than 20,000 men were engaged in railway construction during his last summer. A transformation was going on in the towns. Hopefulness, courage, confidence, he met everywhere.

"It is," he wrote, "with very mingled feelings that I have made this tour—gratification at the signs of improvement which I have seen around me, and at the kindness of my reception, and—sadness to think that it is a last visit. . . . I cannot, without a pang, bring myself to believe that henceforth all the interests of this great and thriving country are to be to me as a matter in which I have no concern. Notwithstanding the atrocities of the press, it is impossible for me to go through the country without feeling that I have a strong hold on the people of the country; that I occupy a place here which no one ever filled before."

He did not over-estimate his own influence. The rancour of party is sometimes short-lived; in 1854 he was probably the most popular man in Canada. The progress which Lord Elgin saw was not merely commercial. Just as in England an astonishing era of improvement followed



the Reform Bill, so in Canada did complete self-government immensely stimulate social advance; after all, democracy, in spite of its faults, is the enemy of social abuses. Since his own days at the university, Lord Elgin had always been interested in education, and in Canada he gave close personal attention to problems of this kind coming before him. An excellent system of primary and secondary schools in the Upper Province reached something like completion during his term of office. About higher education he found a fierce controversy raging, and the issue has still its interest. Though no Church was established in Canada, to the Church of England belonged the ruling hierarchy in the state, and on her behalf they asserted every privilege that could be claimed. When the founding of a university came to be discussed, they insisted that it should be dominated, as Oxford and Cambridge were then dominated, by the Church of England. Yet in Canada the Church of England was relatively weak. Many settlers were Scots and Presbyterians; many others, chiefly Methodists, descended from Loyalists driven out of the United States after the Revolution, not only had no connection with the Anglican communion, but were extremely hostile to it. With a considerable minority of Roman Catholics in addition, the result was that the proportion of Anglicans was barely one in four of the population of the English-speaking



province. Yet they claimed that in all parts of the King's dominions, except Scotland, theirs was the only worship which the State approved, and that in effect the Anglican establishment prevailed in Canada and throughout the Empire.

For higher education a State endowment had been made in the time of George III. by setting apart a great quantity of public land. For a long time these wild lands had, of course, little value, but by 1820 they were bringing in revenue, and soon plans for establishing the university were set on foot. From the first York, now Toronto, was its designated seat. The Archdeacon of York, the Rev. John Strachan, who afterwards became the first Bishop of Toronto, a man of fiery energy and resolution, took a masterful lead in the plans for a university. He went to England in 1827, and secured for the proposed "University of King's College" a royal charter that made Anglican interests supreme. Of an institution to be endowed out of public lands the Anglican Archdeacon of York was to be *ex officio* the President, the Anglican Bishop was to be *ex officio* the Visitor, all the professors were to assent to the Thirty-nine Articles, as were also the students in the divinity faculty. The single feature in the charter which opened the door to members of other communions and made King's College slightly more liberal than the Oxford and Cambridge of the time was that from the students,



other than those in the divinity faculty, no religious tests were required.

That such an institution, supported in effect by public funds, should have been thought at any time possible in Upper Canada now seems amazing indeed. But a small group of Anglican office-holders surrounded the Governor, they filled the upper of the two chambers in the Legislature, and they were strong enough to carry on a pretty vigorous fight for what they wanted. Strong enough they were not to secure for this proposed college the public endowment set apart for higher education. In the popular chamber of the Legislature the charter was vigorously attacked. Addressing the King in protest, the assembly begged him to cancel it, and when the matter was referred to a committee of the British House of Commons, this body, able to view things in Canada with a clearer eye than, before the Reform Bill, it had for home affairs, condemned the proposal to make the college an Anglican preserve. But Dr. Strachan was a grim and determined warrior, and the fight went on. Since the home authorities were too concerned for vested rights to cancel the royal charter, in the end the Legislature asserted and used the significant right to amend it, even though it had been granted by the King. The troubled events culminating in Lord Durham's mission caused delay, and not until 1842 did the University of King's College come into existence, with a great



State endowment for its support. Then all religious tests had been reduced to the single one of belief in the Christian faith. But through Dr. Strachan's predominance as head of the university the students were required to observe the Church seasons, and to attend chapel services with the Anglican ritual. Still dissatisfied, the other bodies, the Presbyterians, the Methodists, the Roman Catholics, all founded institutions of their own for higher education. Dr. Strachan had almost won his point.

Then came the complete self-government in Canada, ushered in by the riotous attacks on Lord Elgin in 1849. As soon as the Legislature was sure of its authority, as soon as the Governor of the day recognized that he must accept the mandates of the Canadian people, in overwhelming force the demand came that Anglican supremacy in the State university should cease. Only a few weeks after the burning of the Parliament Buildings at Montreal the Canadian Legislature transformed the University of King's College into the University of Toronto. Weary of sectarian strife, it resolved that henceforth the university should have no possibility of becoming again its scene. Not only did it abolish religious tests of every kind ; it forbade any compulsory religious observance ; it declared that the chancellor and the members of the senate appointed by the Government must not be ecclesiastics. To crown all, it took away from the university the power to



confer degrees in Divinity, a prohibition that still endures; when, more than fifty years later, the university wished to confer an honorary degree on the Archbishop of Canterbury, it could only make him a Doctor of Laws, not of Divinity!

Such was the end of the attempt by one Church at domination. Dr. Strachan had his revenge. He went to England, and put his case with such effect that the Archbishop of Canterbury of the day declared that the Church had been robbed; other high prelates endorsed the bishop's appeal, and eminent laymen such as Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Gladstone agreed with them. Funds were provided to form a Church university at Toronto. With picturesque vigour of language the good bishop continued the war in Canada against the secular spirit enthroned in the University of Toronto. "Such a fatal departure from all that is good," he said, "is without a parallel in the history of the world;" the "infidel college, dead to all sense of religious truth and unworthy of the blessing of heaven," would lead to "anarchy;" it would "shackle the minds and destroy the eternal hopes of the rising generation;" its work would result in "a moral obliquity incapable of distinguishing right from wrong," and so on.\*

\* So strenuous was the bishop in his denunciations, that Lord Elgin, who had mastered all the details of the intricate question, wrote to the Colonial Secretary, Earl Grey, a brief history of the university. In a correspondence with Bishop Strachan he gently rebuked his extravagance of statement. He desired to see what



In fact, the university did not prove to be the withered trunk that the bishop saw in prophetic vision. In 1853 its constitution was further amended, so as to provide for grouping about it the colleges of the various Churches, and before Lord Elgin left Canada, at the end of 1854, the noble Norman pile, the most striking piece of collegiate architecture in the new world, was already in embryo, though it was erected under his successor. With the university firmly rooted and free to all, the Churches learned that they must guard for themselves their interests in higher education, supplementing instead of dominating the provisions made by the State. And the system has worked well. The University of Toronto, now a great institution with more than 2000 students in Arts, Medicine, and Applied Science, includes a unique group of denominational colleges, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, using the extensive resources of the university, but supporting and entirely controlling their own religious teaching. Time brings its ironies sometimes humorous. In 1904 the value of this system had become so obvious that the very university which Dr. Strachan had founded suspended its powers and became one of the group of colleges in the University of Toronto.

The dispute in Canada about the "Clergy

now exists—one strong university with affiliated colleges, and only with regret assented to the bishop's demand for a royal charter for a Church university.





THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO







Reserves " is worth studying, as further illustrating the fate amid modern conditions in a British community of an attempted State endowment of religion. When, in 1791, a new constitution was given to Canada, more than 2,000,000 acres of land was set apart for the support of a " Protestant clergy." This phrase led to endless disputes, and it is odd that an endowment so well meant should in the end have been denounced as one of the greatest curses that could have been inflicted upon the land. The Church of England claimed that her ministers alone were the "clergy" signified by the Act, and that, as the Established Church of the mother country, she should receive this State endowment. But since the Church of Scotland was a sister establishment, she too put in a claim, which was in time allowed. There were still others who claimed to be "Protestant clergy." As the Methodists, in particular, represented a considerable portion of the population, the justice of their claim was admitted, and in 1840 the Imperial Parliament, taking the matter out of the hands of the colonial Legislature, enacted that the Church lands—the "Clergy Reserves"—should be sold, and that the proceeds should be divided, one-third to go to the clergy of the Church of England, one-sixth to the Church of Scotland, and the remaining half to be granted by the Governor-General, at his discretion, to the different denominations.

The settlement was never satisfactory. It had



not been made by the Canadian Parliament, and its liberal recognition of the Church of England proved troublesome. It is unhappily true that, having learned at home to rely upon an assured position, the Anglican Church for a long time did not show in colonial life the energy and adaptability required to fill her place effectively. In Lord Elgin's time, most of her clergy in Canada had been born and educated in the mother country, and they expected to command the privileged position of home vicars. Some of them were admirably zealous; the annals of the Canadian Church could furnish a record of self-denial and practical saintship creditable to any age of spiritual heroism. But a good many were quite ineffective, and, somehow, in a democratic society, the Anglican Church did not hold the population, and her exclusive claims aroused bitter hostility. The Church of Scotland was also weak because of her divisions. When, in 1843, Dr. Chalmers, on the issue of State patronage, led in the disruption of the mother Church and formed the Free Church of Scotland, few dreamed of the effect which such a movement would have in remote parts of the world. In Canada, where the old kirk of Scotland received State aid, there was also disruption, which aided the clamour already active in favour of dissolving any connection between the various Churches and the State.

With this policy Lord Elgin was not in



sympathy. At best the *status* of the clergy in a new community, dominated by commercialism, was not commanding, and he was unwilling to see the provision for the clergy diverted, as was proposed, to the building of roads and bridges. But he could do little. Too vehement to be resisted were the sectarian passions aroused. Canada demanded that the Imperial Parliament should give back to her authority to deal with the matter, and in 1853 this was done. Prompt action followed; and at Quebec, in the last days of Lord Elgin's *régime*, the Canadian Parliament settled the matter finally. The "Clergy Reserves" were handed over to the municipalities to be used for secular purposes, and only a small commutation fund was reserved for those of the clergy who, under the previous system, had acquired vested rights. It was a pitiful ending of a scheme that had the design of adding dignity and influence to the ministers of religion, but it illustrated once more the truth that, in a community where complete religious toleration and equality prevail, and where there are no inherited traditions from previous conditions, the Churches must shift for themselves.

The "Clergy Reserves" affected Upper Canada chiefly, but in those December days of 1854 was settled a great land question—that relating to seigniorial tenure—which for generations had vexed the French Canadian *habitants*. The founders of New France had transplanted pre-Revolutionary feudalism to Canada. Under this



system the land was to be held by seigneurs, who were to rule over obedient vassals, looking to their lord for leadership, and content to live rather as tenants than as owners of the soil which they cultivated. No such thing as the simple English freehold of land was known. The efforts of France to build up an aristocracy in the new land were ingenuous enough ; there was to be a " Duke of Arkansas," and persons of lesser title—counts, earls, barons—were all to find places in a graded nobility. But fate was against the plan. From the first the feudal seigneur in Canada could show only a beggarly array of vassals, and between him and them there was never the complete social gulf to be found in the Old World. To maintain his rank the seigneur had few outside resources ; the rent of his tenants was only about a penny an acre, and as time went on some of them were found to be wealthier than himself. No idle aristocrat was he, but a hardworking colonist. Often he toiled with his own hands ; sometimes side by side with his " vassals " he chopped down trees and tilled the soil ; the woodman's axe rather than the sword was the fitting symbol of his office. Those who came to live on the seigneur's domain did not look upon themselves as peasants in the Old World sense. They were " habitants," dwellers upon the soil. Instead of serving the seigneur, in many respects it was the seigneur who served them. One of their great needs was a mill for grinding corn. While in the



Old World the mill of the seigneur was the symbol of privilege and power, in the New World it was not so. He was often forced by the Government to construct it for the convenience of his tenants rather than as a source of revenue. Of course as population increased the seigneur's position improved. But then the defects of the system became clearer, and for some time before Lord Elgin's sojourn in Canada the demand for the abolition of seigneurial tenure was acute.

French Canadian feudalism certainly did not suit the genius of the New World. It checked settlement, for new settlers preferred the land under freehold, to be easily secured elsewhere ; it checked the enterprise of the farmers much as the older land system in Ireland checked it, since, in case of sale, the seigneur secured one-twelfth not only of the price of the land but also of the improvements ; it checked manufactures, for the seigneurs controlled the water-power on the rivers. The seigneur had magisterial powers, and the *habitants* resented his jurisdiction over them ; they disliked his annual claim for rent, small though it was ; they found galling his right to a share of the fish which they took from the river flowing past their holdings, and his privilege to cut wood in their forest land and take what building material he needed. Thus it came about that the moment Canada secured control of her own affairs, the seigneurial system, like other anomalies, was doomed, and during Lord Elgin's last days in



Canada the Parliament passed an Act abolishing seigneurial tenure. To vested rights every respect was shown, and elaborate provisions were made for compensation to the seigneurs. But the law now provided that the *habitant* could henceforth buy his land if he chose instead of paying the old rent, and every vestige of seigneurial authority disappeared.

“For the last three months of our residence at Quebec,” writes Oliphant, “we lived in a perfect whirl of gaiety.” There were innumerable festivities, and at a farewell ball given at Spencerwood, the Governor’s residence, Lord Elgin made a parting speech, which showed his sorrow that the sojourn in Canada was now to end. “For the last time I welcome you as my guests to this charming residence, which I have been in the habit of calling my home. I did not, I will frankly confess it, know what it would cost me to break this habit, until the period of my departure approached, and I began to feel that the great interests which have so long engrossed my attention and thoughts were passing out of my hands. I had a hint of what my feelings really were upon this point—a pretty broad hint too—one lovely morning in June last, when I returned to Quebec after my temporary absence in England, and landed in the coves below Spencerwood (because it was Sunday and I did not want to make a disturbance in the town), and when with the greetings of the old people in the coves who put



their heads out of the windows as I passed along, and cried, 'Welcome home again,' still ringing in my ears, I mounted the hill and drove through the avenue to the house door. I saw the drooping trees on the lawn, with every one of which I was so familiar, clothed in the tenderest green of spring, and the river beyond calm and transparent as a mirror, and the ships fixed and motionless as statues on its surface, and the whole landscape bathed in a flood of that bright Canadian sun which so seldom pierces our murky atmosphere on the other side of the Atlantic. I began to think that persons were to be envied who were not forced by the necessities of their position to quit these engrossing interests and lovely scenes for the purpose of proceeding to distant lands; but who are able to remain among them until they pass to that quiet corner of the Garden of Mount Hermon which juts into the river and commands a view of the city . . . ; so that through the dim watches of that tranquil night which precedes the dawning of the eternal day the majestic citadel of Quebec, with its noble train of satellite hills, may seem to rest for ever on the sight, and the low murmur of the waters of the St. Lawrence, with the hum of busy life on their surface, to fall ceaselessly on the ear. I cannot bring myself to believe that the future has in store for me any interests which will fill the place of those I am now abandoning."

In this, his last speech in Canada, Lord Elgin



touched the chord of religious faith rarely wanting in any of his public addresses. At the time of his departure he had in his mind a vague hope that some day he might return to Canada, perhaps as the Governor of the federation of the provinces, already beginning to be talked about. But the closing words of the passage proved deeply true. Never again did the interests of his career appeal to him as those in Canada had done. His remaining years of public service were to be spent in the East, and of the East he could never speak as home.



### CHAPTER III

#### FIRST MISSION TO CHINA, 1857-59

**I**T was at a critical juncture that Lord Elgin returned home; Britain was in the midst of the Crimean War. The national military habit of drifting in time of peace into an ineffectual routine of red tape was as conspicuous then as it has been since. When the country at length grew angry at unnecessary suffering and loss in the Crimea, Lord Aberdeen's coalition ministry was driven from office, and the more aggressive and resolute Lord Palmerston became Prime Minister. He offered to Lord Elgin a seat in the Cabinet as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, a proof that his work in Canada had won recognition. The old parties were breaking up. Once Lord Elgin had been proud to rank himself among the Tory followers of the Duke of Wellington; but Peel had since divided the Tories into two hostile groups on the question of the Corn Laws, and, though nearly ten years old, the division was not yet healed. In such a time of upheaval ties of party meant comparatively little. Long absent from England, Lord Elgin hardly understood the



issues in home politics. But the question of the war was supreme for the moment, and, though he refused to take office, he gave Lord Palmerston assurances that he would support heartily a policy of carrying it vigorously to a conclusion. For about two years he lived chiefly at Broomhall. His few speeches at this time were chiefly devoted to enlightening the British mind on colonial, and especially on Canadian, problems. In 1856 the University of Oxford recognized his services by conferring upon him the honorary degree of D.C.L.

During this lull in Lord Elgin's career, events were ripening in the East which were to prove of deep moment to him. Since Britain's first war with China, ending by the Treaty of Nankin in 1843, there had been a standing quarrel between the Chinese authorities at Canton and the British and other traders who desired access to that city. To Canton, among other Chinese towns, the treaty of 1843 gave foreigners the right of entrance. But the Chinese showed little regard for the letter of their treaty obligations, and into Canton they would not allow the foreign traders to go. Yeh, the Governor of the province in which Canton is situated, had his eye on the court at Peking, where foreigners were despised and hated; he knew that favour was to be gained in high circles by showing insolent scorn of the "barbarians," and so he obstructed their advances whenever possible.



On October 8, 1856, Chinese marine police at Canton boarded the lorcha *Arrow*, lying there (a lorcha is a vessel partly English and partly Chinese in its rig), and carried off the crew, one of whom was charged with piracy. This action raised a difficult question of jurisdiction. While the crew consisted wholly of Chinese, who were, of course, subjects of the Chinese Government, the boat itself was registered as a British ship, and therefore, under the existing system, was not subject to Chinese jurisdiction. It was asserted that the Chinese seized the crew of the lorcha while the British flag was flying; but they denied this, and claimed that she was flying no flag, that in reality she had no British registry at the time, and that the Chinese Government was asserting only its jurisdiction over its own subjects. Even if the British registry, which the Chinese disputed, had existed, they claimed that it was improperly granted to a vessel like the *Arrow*, built by Chinese, manned by them, and, in all but name, Chinese in every respect. Since the misdeeds of their own countrymen were being shielded behind the British flag, the incident was one specially likely to arouse Chinese susceptibilities. Had it stood by itself, adjustment might have been easy. But behind it was the persistent refusal of Yeh's Government, in spite of the rights conferred by treaty, to permit foreigners to enter Canton. No foreign devils, Yeh said obstinately, should enter the gates of Canton. They

English  
chinese



were confined to their "factories" outside the city.

→ The British Consul, Mr. Parkes, afterwards famous as Sir Harry Parkes, complained to Yeh, and offered to inquire into any charges against the *Arrow*. Yeh's answer was not conciliatory, and a trifling matter developed rapidly into a difficult controversy. The British demanded formal apology and redress for the seizure of the *Arrow's* crew; the Chinese persistently refused to accept this demand, and at last the appeal was made to force. Two weeks after the original incident, the British naval authorities had occupied the Barrier Forts before Canton, and were seizing Chinese ships, while, on the other hand, Yeh stolidly refused every concession, and offered a substantial reward for every Englishman's head brought to him.

In England the case aroused keen interest. Lord Palmerston was well understood to be an exacting negotiator, with no knowledge of the art of conciliation, and he was attacked on all sides by what he called "a fortuitous concourse of atoms;" by Disraeli, for the Conservatives; by Gladstone, for the followers of Peel; by Lord John Russell, Cobden, and Bright, for the Liberals. Although at his best in a fight in which he could claim to support the nation's dignity, the veteran statesman was beaten in the House. Instead of resigning, he accepted Disraeli's challenge to appeal to the country, and his appeal was not



in vain. The voters rallied to a tried leader, who was at any rate patriotic, blunt, and straightforward, and he came back from the election with a triumphant majority. (Meanwhile, between the defeat in the House and the victory at the polls, his Government decided to send forward troops to China.)

In the absence of the telegraph to the East, steady direction from London was not possible, and it was particularly necessary to have a wise and discreet representative in China. After "anxious deliberations," as the Government said, Lord Elgin was selected for the task, and in April, 1857, he was on his way to China. He took with him, as secretary to the mission, his brother, the Hon. F. W. A. Bruce, himself destined to a distinguished diplomatic career; and, as private secretary, Mr. Lawrence Oliphant, who had been with him in Canada. There were four additional attachés; among them Mr. H. B. Loch, who later had strange and distressing experiences in China, but survived, and died in mature old age as Lord Loch.

Although, in the days before the Suez Canal, the troops were obliged to go round the Cape, Lord Elgin himself went out by way of Egypt, and arrived at Ceylon before the end of May. At that time, in more than one quarter in the East, Britain had perplexing difficulties to solve. While the British troops were *en route* to China, Sir James Outram and General Havelock were



bringing to a close military operations in Persia. But the troubles in Persia and China seemed small before the startling news which Lord Elgin heard at Ceylon, of the outbreak of sanguinary revolt in India. After preliminary murmurs elsewhere, on May 10 a native regiment mutinied at Meerut, and the movement spread with appalling rapidity. It should not be forgotten that the revolt was among the soldiery, that the people of India did not rise, and that in important parts of British territory—in Madras and Bombay—there was no mutiny. But none the less was the situation the gravest that Britain has faced in the East. Of course the magnitude of the outbreak, and the pressing and immediate danger to India, were not at once realized; Lord Elgin's first thought was to hurry to China, settle the business there, and then to have his troops free for further work in India. Lord Canning, one of Lord Elgin's intimate school and college friends, was Governor-General of India, and at Singapore, where Lord Elgin arrived on June 3, he received an earnest request from Canning to send him troops. It was a momentous crisis. Troops for China would soon arrive, and Lord Elgin's powers were such that he could divert them to aid India. But he might well pause to consider what would happen meanwhile in China. There for nearly nine months a state of desultory warfare had continued. Though the British still occupied the Barrier Forts before Canton, Yeh continued



defiant, and ready to buy Englishmen's heads at thirty dollars each. Besides bombarding parts of Canton, the British sank a good many Chinese junks, while the Chinese seized British ships, decapitating crew and passengers alike, and killing in all about four hundred British subjects; they burnt all the foreign factories near Canton, and harassed their opponents whenever possible. Incendiarism, kidnapping, and assassination were becoming permanent features of this ignoble warfare. Until the troops arrived the British could do nothing decisive. Sir John Bowring, the Governor of the adjacent British colony of Hong Kong, who claimed to know two hundred and to speak one hundred languages, could yet find no words adequate to describe the conduct of Yeh. The Chinese leader derided the helplessness of the British, and when he won occasional successes pompously erected triumphal arches to mark the humiliation of his foes. So successful was he that "Devil's heads" fell in price, an indication of an abundant supply. Even in Hong Kong itself the Chinese traders and the children in the streets jeered at any chance Briton they met, and, as Oliphant says, "took a mercenary view of his head."

Unsatisfactory the situation of Canton certainly was, but Lord Elgin saw that this petty war could drag on for a long time without any vital damage, while in India an empire was at stake. Canning's appeal could not go unheeded.



At the Cape, Sir George Grey, the Governor, was doing his best to divert to India every soldier that could be spared, and Lord Elgin's sound judgment led him to the same conclusion. He decided that China must wait, and gave orders that the destination of the troops should be changed to India. It needed unselfish courage to take this step. Himself it condemned to inactivity for months; and if perchance the trouble in India proved less serious than was feared, it would be said that he had yielded to momentary panic, and the losers in China would unite to protest that they were sacrificed to needless quixotism in India. Unhappily the terrible character of the struggle in India disarmed any possible retort of this kind.

Even without troops it seemed best that Lord Elgin should go on to China. From the first it had been arranged that he should continue his journey from Singapore in the magnificent warship *Shannon*, commanded by Captain Peel, a younger brother of Sir Robert Peel, who had gone out by the Cape route. Late in June she arrived, and Lord Elgin proceeded in her to Hong Kong. But, once at Hong Kong, he found that without troops the British could do nothing. It was advisable also to await the arrival of other ambassadors. With fine impartiality towards all foreigners, the Chinese had committed outrages that left France, the United States, and Russia with scores to settle. Each



of these states was sending a representative to Canton, but none had yet arrived, and Lord Elgin could not hope to see until September Baron Gros, the representative of France, who, though her trading interests in the East were but slight, was acting in special concert with Great Britain to bring China to terms. For Lord Elgin to wait idly at Hong Kong was worse than useless; it would reveal his impotence to Yeh. Moreover, Canning, at Calcutta, was clamorous for further help. That lonely man, angering the panic-stricken people about him by his very calmness and moderation, denounced but really honoured by the name "Clemency Canning" hurled at him, sorely needed some wise friend with whom he could take counsel, and he urged Lord Elgin to come to him. The *Shannon* herself would be no mean help, especially with so ardent a commander as Peel. Conclusive in their strength were the forces drawing Lord Elgin to Calcutta, and so at the middle of July the *Shannon* was headed back to India. With her went the *Pearl*, to aid in carrying what further troops could be spared from China.

Owing to adverse winds the wearisome journey lasted about three weeks, and all the time Lord Elgin was torn with anxiety about the menaced empire. At Singapore he found no good news, for there he heard of the awful massacre at Cawnpore. "Nothing can be worse," he writes; "however, I have with me about 1700 fighting



men, and perhaps we may have more if we find a transport in the Straits and take it in tow." The merchants at Singapore presented him with an address of appreciation for his sacrifice of his own work in the defence of India. Canning now knew that he was coming, and the arrival of the *Shannon* was eagerly looked for. As the great warship swept up to Calcutta past Garden Reach on August 8 there was huge excitement. The people on the shore cheered wildly ; the skipper of a passing merchantship worked himself into a state of frenzy in a speech which was to his distant and receding audience on the *Shannon* only vigorous pantomime ; his crew cheered, and then, to the thunder of the *Shannon's* guns and an answering salute from the fort, the anchor was dropped at Calcutta. "There was hardly a countenance in Calcutta," said Lord Elgin, "save that of the Governor-General, Lord Canning, which was not blanched with fear ; I shall never forget the cheers with which the *Shannon* was received as she sailed up the river." So powerful a warship had never been there before, and the protection of her guns itself brought a sense of security. Within a week a naval brigade from the *Shannon*, with some of her 68-pounders, was hurrying to Allahabad, where it did noble service, and Lord Elgin's reward for his course was to know that the troops diverted to India were among the first to stem the tide of rebellion. His forces destined for China garrisoned Bengal



and relieved both Lucknow and Cawnpore. At such a crisis his 5000 men may well have saved the situation.

August, the month which Lord Elgin spent at Calcutta, was the very darkest in the history of India. Yet, to the much-travelled Lawrence Oliphant, Calcutta seemed singularly unconcerned about its terrible situation. Lucknow was besieged, Delhi and Agra had already fallen ; nearly every European family in Calcutta was harbouring refugees ; a few days before the solitary survivors of the Cawnpore massacre had reached the capital. Yet withal the daily routine of life was to be lived, and at Calcutta beauty and fashion were as eager as ever to be admired ; the only signs of the dangerous times were the frequent drilling of troops, and the increased number of sentries on guard ; the native sentries, however, retained only the ramrods of their guns, for they had been disarmed as a precautionary measure. Though the cloud was coming nearer, Calcutta was still remote from the centres of the mutiny. Lord Elgin saw little of Canning, immersed early and late in harassing duties ; he did not even go out daily for the necessary breath of fresh air—a fatal error, as his early death proved.

The tone of society at Calcutta did not please Lord Elgin ; perhaps his strictures are too severe. "It is a terrible business," he says, "this living among inferior races. I have seldom, from man or woman, since I came to the East, heard a



sentence which was reconcilable with the hypothesis that Christianity had ever come into the world. Detestation, contempt, ferocity, vengeance, whether Chinamen or Indians be the object." He notes how quickly one comes to look upon the *salaaming* servants as mere machines. Rarely could the masters understand a word of the native speech, and this helped to increase the suspicions of treachery which the horrors committed by the sepoys abundantly justified. Among the Europeans themselves the instinct to crush and kill was uppermost. In one of the rebellion districts some British commissioners not only hanged all the rebels they could find, but promised the dying men that their bodies should be given to the dogs, in order that this pollution might, according to Hindoo belief, involve also the torment of their souls. Canning dismissed these commissioners; but when, at a dinner-party in Calcutta, his action came under discussion, a reverend gentleman could not understand what the officials had done to call for Government censure, and he seemed, Lord Elgin thought, rather to regret that torture had not preceded the hanging.

Since both British troops and the French Ambassador were to meet Lord Elgin at Hong Kong by the end of September, he could remain in India only a few weeks. Returning, not now in an imposing warship, but in a merchant steamer, he had on the way a sharp attack of fever, but



by September 20 he was again at Hong Kong. The heat was awful, and to it he was specially sensitive. His ship lay anchored some two miles from shore, with which communication was difficult, sometimes even dangerous, and amidst conditions far from comfortable he now took up his real work in China.

It was Lord Elgin's difficult task to try to effect an understanding between two types of civilization differing to an almost hopeless extent. The dominant attitude of the Chinese towards outsiders was, and is, contempt. For centuries China had been a great civilized state with neighbours inferior to herself; even Japan had been China's pupil, and had learned from China her literary forms and much of her civilization. In dealing with her Asiatic neighbours China had been strong enough to make them do what she desired; to bully them, to cajole, to coerce them. Not unnaturally, her situation begot an arrogant frame of mind. China had attained perfection; the idea that there could be excellence in anything beyond China was scornfully condemned in high circles. When the troubles were brewing which led to the events of Lord Elgin's mission, Keying, a high official, ventured to hint to the Court that the English were a powerful nation, to be treated with mildness and conciliation. He was promptly dismissed from office. "Oh, how fallen and degraded is he," ran the Imperial decree; "we have the same contempt for him that



we have for a wild, yelling cur." The Chinese Court took the old Roman Imperial view that mankind was under a single sovereign head, to whom all other states were vassals. Any nation refusing obedience to the authority of the Chinese ruler was in a state of revolt, and foreign Governments addressing the Chinese Court in terms of equality were guilty of ignorant and arrogant impudence. By a decree of 1850, a state sending despatches direct to an Imperial minister was pronounced "contumacious and insulting in the extreme." In its blind ignorance this was the language which China continued to use to all the great European states, and she was ready to defy one or all of them alike. Even unlettered Chinese sneered at the foreigners who violated Chinese etiquette who could not speak the Chinese language, who refused to conform to Chinese customs ; a Chinese teacher, the pink of courtesy when on duty in his foreign employer's house, would cut him in the street where friends might notice the undesirable acquaintance.

The temper of the English intruder was sometimes as unreasonable and arrogant as that of the Chinese. "The barbarians regard the seizure of a governor-general or a secretary of state as they do the tying up of a dog or a pig," wrote a great Chinese official in 1858. "Our people for a long time," says Lord Elgin, "used to insist on every Chinaman they met taking his hat off. Of course it rather astonished a respectable Chinese



shopkeeper to be poked in the ribs by a sturdy sailor or soldier, and told in bad Chinese or in pantomime to take off his hat, which is a thing they never do, and which is not with them even a mark of respect." The unwarlike character of the Chinese trading classes served to encourage these violent methods. A little later, when Lord Elgin was at Tientsin—a place where foreigners had never yet been seen abroad—some Englishmen walking in the city were hooted and pressed by the mob, and one of them lost his dog and his hat. To avenge the insult a party of marines was marched into the city through an excited crowd; some well-to-do shopkeepers were arrested and carried off, and from time to time the marines seized individuals in the crowd and obliged them to repeat aloud the formula, "It is very wrong to insult an Englishman; I will never insult an Englishman." Perhaps this was an admirable way to teach manners to the Chinese, but it was rather likely to encourage their notion that the English were "insolent barbarians."

Soon after arriving before Canton the second time Lord Elgin was supported by an adequate military force, for no longer were all the available soldiers required in India. The French Ambassador, Baron Gros, arrived, as did also Mr. Reed, the American representative, in a huge warship, the *Minnesota*, and Count Poutiatine, the Russian representative, in a small paddle-wheel steamer. But Yeh, the ruler of Canton, was not impressed



by this evidence that four powerful nations stood ready to demand redress, and he went on in the old blundering, incompetent way, refusing either to yield or to make any preparations to meet the threatened attack on Canton. For two weary months the negotiations continued with little result.

It was at this depressing time of waiting that Lord Elgin received the news of the death of Lady Matilda Maxwell, the elder sister who had taken a noble part in his early education, and his letters are tinged with sadness. "Already, when this letter reaches you, the green weeds will have begun to creep over the new-made grave, and the crust of habit to cover wounds which at first bled most freely; . . . hers was a life of which death is rather the crown than the close—so that it will not be in gloom but in the soft sweet light of memory that they who have been wont to walk with her and are now deprived of her companionship will have henceforward to tread their weary way. . . . She is gone. I do not expect ever to see her like again."

He had much besides his own sorrows to think of. It was a bad time to negotiate when the Chinese thought Britain's hold on India was weakening, and when the Home Government was intently occupied with that problem. Lord Elgin was somewhat scornful of the supineness of Government that let the abuses in India grow



to the point of mutiny, and then in a panic almost concluded that the game was up in the East. He gives an ironical receipt for a method to make sure of popular support. "Never interfere to check an evil until it has attained such proportions that all the world sees plainly the necessities of the case. . . . I am not at all sure but that the time is approaching when foresight will be a positive disqualification in a statesman." While criticizing the Home Government he himself was under fire. The most vigorous Englishman at Canton was the acting Consul, Mr. Parkes, who had thorough insight into the Chinese character. Though the two men in time understood and respected each other, at first Parkes chafed at what he considered unnecessary *hauteur* in Lord Elgin towards the resident English. He thought Lord Elgin exaggerated the faults of his countrymen in dealing with the Chinese, and that he had not sounded the depths of Chinese stubbornness and duplicity. Perhaps the peer showed too clearly his suspicion of the motives of a merely commercial community; to them it seemed as if he thought his chief mission in China was to protect the Chinese from British greed.)

Lord Elgin soon found that he could hope for nothing from Yeh, and on December 12, 1857, a day upon which his heart was gladdened by news of the relief of Lucknow, he joined Baron Gros in sending an *ultimatum*. The British



demanded the fulfilment of treaty obligations, and compensation to British subjects for losses ; if no settlement was reached forthwith, the matter was to be placed in the hands of the military and naval commanders. It was an ignoble prospect that lay before the allies. Although a desultory struggle had been going on for months, the mass of the Chinese population was still unconscious that anything like real war was imminent. Lord Elgin knew that to make war on Canton meant the massacre of innocent people, who already were suffering terribly from the foreign blockade. One day the French admiral sent ashore to a village near Canton a few casks of damaged biscuits, and such a rush for this poor spoil ensued that some people were drowned. When the British approached the Chinese shore, not even a pistol was fired at them. A gunboat went aground near one of the quays of Canton, and the officers coolly called on the Chinese crowd to help pull her off, which they cheerfully did. "Fancy having to fight such people," says Lord Elgin ; "I hate the whole thing so much that I cannot trust myself to write about it." The issue raised in regard to the *Arrow* he thought utterly frivolous ; "that wretched question of the *Arrow*," he wrote, "is a scandal to us, and is so considered, I have reason to know, by all except the few who are personally compromised." But he agreed with the resolute Parkes as to the need of a better understanding at Canton with the Chinese.



On December 24 Lord Elgin gave Yeh forty-eight hours to deliver over the city. Failing this, Canton would be bombarded and taken. Lord Elgin fixed the dates so that December 25, Christmas Day, should not see the first attack. In the Church Calendar the "Massacre of the Innocents" happened to be the day when the bombardment should begin, and in view of the fate impending over Canton there was a grim fitness in the season. "I never felt so ashamed of myself in my life," Lord Elgin said to Commodore Elliot (one of the naval officers in China), and when Elliot asked why, he replied, that he was earning for himself a place in the Litany as "plague, pestilence, and famine."

Of course Yeh would not yield; he was reported to be spending much time in sacrificing to an idol. So, on Monday, December 28, with terrific noise, the bombardment of Canton began, and was watched by crowds of Chinese spectators from the adjacent hillsides. It lasted for twenty-seven hours. Few shells were thrown into the heart of the town, and in consequence the loss of life was not great; in all probability not more than two hundred fell. As usual, the Chinese, with no *esprit de corps*, proved quite unable to hold their own against European discipline. When the forts were assaulted by the troops, resistance was so slight that on the second day the British and French flags were flying over the defences of Canton,



and the city was at the mercy of the allies. On January 1, 1858, Lord Elgin and Baron Gros, who, as civilians, had passively awaited the result of military operations, landed with some ceremony, and marched with their escorts to the headquarters on Magazine Hill, commanding an extensive view of the city and of the surrounding country. The experience was interesting. To a handful of foreign troops had fallen a place containing 1,000,000 people, and it lay at their feet that January afternoon, says Lord Elgin, "as a city of the dead," in impressive and almost painful silence. Though many of the people were flying from the stricken city, the houses lining the various streets cut off the view of any movement of the population, and this strengthened the impression of deathlike stillness.

→ No more in London than in Peking did the capture of Canton produce much effect. When Lord Palmerston's political life hung in the balance on the *Arrow* question, every one was interested in events in China, but that phase of the issue had passed away, and *The Times* said of the fall of Canton, "nobody is giving the smallest thought to the matter." So little was Peking moved that trade with the English in the north went bravely on; the only people vitally concerned were the Cantonese themselves. To thousands the occupation involved utter ruin; on the ground that it had been taken by assault the troops were allowed to pillage the captured city, )



and the victors secured immense treasure, which the Cantonese proved quite willing to carry to the warships.

"Our Jacks," says Oliphant, "presented a most grotesque appearance, as they returned to their ships waving Chinese banners, their heads covered with mandarins' caps, and their knapsacks filled with spoils of a miscellaneous description; though, to do them justice, we may fairly conjecture that these were rather ornamental than useful in their character. In this respect our simple tars presented a marked contrast in their looting propensities to their more prudent comrades among the allies. These latter possessed a wonderful instinct for securing portable articles of value; and, while honest Jack was flourishing down the street with a broad grin of triumph on his face, a bowl of goldfish under one arm, and a cage of canary birds under the other, honest Jean, with a demure countenance and no external display, was conveying his well-lined pockets to the waterside."

Perhaps the Chinese are less blindly submissive to their rulers than we often suspect; at any rate, a strong feeling against Yeh was soon apparent. To capture that impracticable ruler was most desirable, and, on January 5, it was resolved to send an English and French column into the city to seize him. Guided by the indefatigable Parkes, the small forces marched directly to Yeh's yamen (official residence), but for a time he eluded them. His rambling palace seemed



empty, and an old man who was found reading in a garden told the searchers that Yeh had been absent for five days. But this venerable deceiver was made to disclose the fact that Yeh had taken refuge in the yamen of the Tartar general. It seemed at first dangerous to take a small force to that point in the very heart of a hostile city, but with two Chinese as guides it was done. The doors of the yamen were found closed, and when the blue-jackets broke them open and rushed in, an old man dressed as a mandarin threw himself at their feet and said he was Yeh. But Parkes knew that Yeh was a very fat man, which this mandarin was not. The blue-jackets swarmed through the place, and at length found Yeh at the extreme rear of the yamen, making the grotesque efforts of a very fat man to get over the wall. Captain Sir Astley Cooper Kay seized him round the neck, and, held also by his long tail and with fifty blue-jackets dancing round him, brandishing drawn swords and revolvers and cheering wildly, he may well have thought that his hour had come. By evening both he and the Tartar general in command at Canton were prisoners on one of the warships. Yeh conducted himself with becoming dignity; he inquired politely if his captors were likely to kill him, and, a little later, tried to keep up the assumption that he had come on board to negotiate with Lord Elgin. He was a sufficiently disgusting object, with his enormous bulk, his black teeth, dirty hands, and horror of water.



He boasted that he had worn his greasy coat for ten years, and he boasted besides that in his time he had put to death 100,000 people, and had ordered the massacre of two or three times as many more in the towns and villages which he had punished for rebellion. So expert had become his executioners, that *The Times* correspondent declared from personal knowledge that a single man cut off twenty heads in a minute at Canton. Sometimes Yeh with even less of mercy had stooped to torture not only men but women; the wife of a rebel general he had slowly killed by slicing the flesh from her body. His day was over. Since his presence was thought to have a disturbing effect upon the Chinese, he was sent to Calcutta, where he soon died, to the last showing impassive contempt for his barbarian captors.

Soon the conquerors were going everywhere about Canton, and, though they went in small parties of sometimes only two, they were not molested. A little union and resolution would, it should seem, have made this "barbarian" triumph impossible. But the Chinese had neither. Feeble as Yeh's leadership had been, now that he was gone they were utterly helpless; there was no patriotism, no public spirit to which an appeal could be made. The leaderless people supinely waited for others to act, and, with a great province containing 20,000,000 people on their hands, the allies were sorely puzzled. They had among



them only two or three persons who understood Chinese, and obviously so few could not administer the affairs of the city. At length, after anxious deliberation, Lord Elgin and those acting with him decided to instal as the ruler of Canton the Lieutenant-Governor Pehkwei, who had stood next to the deposed Yeh. With him was associated the Tartar general, and both were to be subject to the final authority of a European commission of three, with Parkes as the leading spirit.

On January 9, with considerable state to strike the imagination of the people, the new rule was finally inaugurated, but not without a comical mishap. The British and French Plenipotentiaries, preceded by military bands and followed by a body of troops, passed through the crowded "Avenue of Benevolence and Love" (China is the flowery kingdom!) to the Governor's yamen. But when the ceremony of handing over the government to the two high officials was to be completed, it was found that these gentlemen were safely in prison, and that no orders had been given to produce them. Though they were sent for hastily, night was falling before Lord Elgin, in the arrogant tone necessary to impress the Chinese, informed them of the conditions on which they were to hold power. The two mandarins, with, as Oliphant says, "that charmed and delighted manner which a Chinaman puts on when he is powerless and alarmed," accepted the trust, and at once entered upon their duties. So ended



what Lord Elgin called "about the strangest day which has yet occurred in Chinese history—the Governor of this arrogant city of Canton accepting office at the hand of two barbarian chiefs."

Canton began soon to forget its recent troubles. But "looting" still continued, the work sometimes of Chinese desperadoes, though sometimes too of the more lawless of the conquerors. When order was once more restored, the British sailors were kept on board their ships, and depredations were punished with the cat—an effective deterrent. But in the French force, as Lord Elgin notes with regret, flogging was no longer permitted; in consequence the men had less fear of punishment, and kept up their plundering persistently. A fortnight after the city was taken, Lord Elgin found that pillage was still going on. To him it seemed bad enough that the capture itself was accompanied by pillage; now, with a new civil Government established, he resolved that it should stop. Though the military and naval authorities were the ones to deal directly with it, he still had a weapon in his own hands, and he let it be understood that if "looting" continued he would, as a political measure, order the evacuation of the city, continuing to hold only some points of vantage as a basis of negotiations with the Emperor. "No human power," he said, "shall induce me to accept the office of oppressor of the people." A good many thought his policy too mild. But he held firmly to a moderate course, and he was



much pleased by praise from Mr. Reed, the Plenipotentiary of the United States, for his "gentle and discreet counsels." The threat of evacuation proved effective, and "looting" was more vigorously checked.

Within a week or two Canton was so orderly that Lord Elgin, accompanied by only two sailors, and by Mr., afterwards Sir Thomas, Wade, who knew Chinese, took long walks through the crowded streets. From no one of its thousands did he meet with disrespect. In the slums of a European city of the same size, signs of drunkenness would be everywhere; but, though Canton was only a dreary waste of small and poor houses, the population was sober and, in consequence, civil; if the Chinese use opium to excess, it is at least without the maddening effect of gin. The people had wan and haggard faces. Amid foul odours and degrading sights Lord Elgin made his way by wet, narrow, tortuous streets, to one of the prisons, where he saw horrors "beyond what I could have pictured to myself." He found prisoners confined in dens like those used in Europe for wild beasts. The pestilential atmosphere, it is true, could not have been worse than that which Howard found in the English prisons less than a century earlier, but it was sickening, and from it were carried out human beings wasted so that their legs were no thicker than a man's wrist, covered with foul wounds, the result of severe bastinadoing, and gasping for the food



which the prison authorities thought it no part of their duty to furnish. A child of ten was brought lying squat upon a board, with legs paralyzed and useless from having been ironed together for months. In a court to which Lord Elgin was attracted by groans, rats were preying upon the corpse of one of the diseased and famished prisoners, lying there among the living. He released several, who claimed to have been in the service of Europeans, and so under their protection; and he ventured to send to Pehkwei, the new Governor of Canton, as a sample of Canton prison management, a half-dead boy of fifteen, whom he found in chains. But Pehkwei was furious at this interference with his administration, and threatened to commit suicide. "I am not a man greedy of life," he wrote, "and, sooner than be thus unreasonably oppressed, I would gladly give my life to the State." Dealing with such officials the reformer's work is not easy. Lord Elgin's charge against Chinese administration was not so much of wanton cruelty as of utter neglectfulness and lack of foresight.

Upon Peking the capture of Canton produced still no effect. In truth, in this amazing China, the war in the south had hardly interrupted friendly relations and peaceful commerce with the British in the north. Throughout Lord Elgin had been convinced that the only way to bring the Emperor to terms was by a direct menace to Peking, and he agreed with the other



Plenipotentiaries that now they must all proceed northward to treat in the neighbourhood of the Chinese Court. On February 10 the blockade of Canton was raised, and the next day Lord Elgin and Baron Gros addressed letters to the Chinese Government at Peking, declaring that the foreign occupation of the city would continue until China should concede the two chief points—of receiving foreign Ministers at or near the Court, and of permitting freer intercourse with foreigners throughout China. They demanded that an Imperial Commissioner should be sent to Shanghai, in the north, to negotiate, and they declared that if by the end of March such an officer with adequate powers had not appeared, they would take steps to enforce their views.

Lord Elgin was glad to leave Canton. That the ships might refit he went first to Hong Kong for two weeks, and then in the early days of March, in the warship *Furious*, he set out for Shanghai, whither he was to be followed by Admiral Sir Michael Seymour, who had agreed to assemble there a considerable naval force by April 1. The recent events at Canton had been well fitted to lead a man clothed with such heavy responsibilities to define clearly his line of action, and a leisurely journey northward gave Lord Elgin time to review the situation. An admirable correspondent, his letters to Lady Elgin at this time were, as he said, at once his “conscience and his memory ;” he was examining



himself before the tribunal of conscience, and in one letter he lays down these admirable rules—

“Do nothing with which your own conscience can reproach you; *nothing* in its largest sense; nothing including *omission* as well as *commission*; not nothing only in the meaning of having done no ill, but nothing also in the meaning of having omitted no opportunity of doing good. You are then well *with yourself*.” He makes the half cynical addition, “If it is worth while to be well *with others*—SUCCEED.” Admirable but difficult rules for a statesman, to whom sins of omission, the washing his hands of responsibility and leaving action to others, are so easy!

Lord Elgin had always a keen eye for the characteristics of the Chinese, so curiously different from the people of the other great oriental state, India. Since in China there is no caste, the people are free from the sectarian fanaticism of India. Religious leaders, as such, command but little respect. Near Ningpo, where Lord Elgin halted on the journey northward, in taking a long walk he was accompanied by some curious and good-natured Chinese, to point out the sights, and adds that one among them, “a very dirty lad, without a tail, proved to be the priest. . . . They do not appear to have a particle of respect for their religion, and yet they spend a good deal of money on their temples.” Though he saw much to admire in these industrious and inoffensive people, he found in their extreme poverty and



their ignorance no inducement to value greatly the ancient civilization of which China boasted.

Before the end of March Lord Elgin arrived at Shanghai, the most northerly port at which Europeans then had treaty rights, and the nearest to Peking. The foreign settlement, a town by itself, with houses built and furnished in the European fashion, was imposing after the spectacle of native squalor at Canton. Shanghai was, indeed, so thoroughly Europeanized as to be a very dear place to live in; a comparatively small house cost from £300 to £400 a year. To strengthen the likeness to a European city there were even policemen in the garb familiar to London. But no more at Shanghai than at Canton had the Europeans been able so to impress the Chinese as to break down their exclusive attitude, and Lord Elgin could perceive not the slightest disposition to make concessions. Instead of finding, as he had desired, an Imperial Commissioner with full powers to treat, he received merely a message, and it was not from the Imperial Secretary of State to whom he had written. This high official would not condescend to deal directly with a foreigner, and it was through the Governor-General of the Province that his arrogant mandate was communicated. The Ambassador of Great Britain was brusquely informed that an Imperial Commissioner could not do business at Shanghai, and that the Plenipotentiaries might deal with China only by returning to



Canton. There they should await the arrival of a Commissioner, to take the place of Yeh, now declared to be dismissed from office and degraded. Not only Britain, but France, the United States, Russia, all were snubbed in this summary way ; with this difference, that the Russian representative was told to go to Amur. In face of such folly, Lord Elgin could only decide to advance towards Peking.

In order to impress the Chinese Government with the gravity of the situation, action must, above all, be prompt and decisive. It was urgent that a considerable fleet should gather quickly at the mouth of the Peiho, the water route to Peking, to seize the forts there if necessary, and to send gunboats up the river to Tientsin. But unhappily Lord Elgin had no sufficient force. He was disappointed to receive a despatch from Admiral Seymour saying that, owing to continued troubles at Canton, his departure for Shanghai would be delayed at least ten days. Meanwhile the ambassador did the best he could. Thinking it necessary to move on towards Peking, he left at Shanghai an urgent message for the admiral to follow as quickly as possible, and set out with the *Furious*, and two or three gunboats.

The Gulf of Pecheli, across the entrance to which Port Arthur and Wei-hei-wei now face each other, is not an attractive region, and as Lord Elgin's small fleet approached the mouth of the Peiho the prospect was desolate in the extreme.



A shallow sea of muddy water, a low-lying shore in great part arid wastes of sand from which came hot winds and choking clouds of dust, united to make the outlook less than cheerful. The British found the resourceful Russian Ambassador, Admiral Poutiatine, at the front as usual, anchored off the mouth of the Peiho, in his small steamer the *Amerika*, and there, eight miles from shore, and often with the land not visible, Lord Elgin took up his position. "It was dreadful," says Oliphant, "to contemplate the prospect of remaining permanently at anchor in so forlorn a spot. . . . The turbid waters were lashed into foam by gales which . . . kept the gulf in the condition of a cauldron of boiling pea-soup." To get into the Peiho, a bar must be crossed which at the highest tide had eleven feet of water, and, at the lowest, but one and a half. The Chinese mandarins exultingly believed that no warships could cross this bar, but, in any case, on both the north and south banks, inside the bar, forts—the now famous Taku Forts—menaced the further advance of unwelcome intruders.

For weary weeks Lord Elgin lay here impotent. At first the little *Slaney* was the only gunboat which could cross the bar. Up the river passed hundreds of Chinese junks, carrying to Peking the annual tribute of rice, upon which that city depended. By cutting off these supplies Lord Elgin had planned to bring Peking to terms, but with so small a force he was powerless, and



this the Chinese well understood. Inside the bar the Taku Forts showed a great display of bunting, and playful invitations from their defenders to "come on" were not infrequent. In some respects the English were not slow to "come on." The *Slaney* seized a few empty junks, and by transferring to them a part of the coal and other equipment of the powerful gunboat *Cormorant*, so lightened her that she got over the bar ; how she could get away in the face of a possible reverse was another matter.

The position of the allies improved steadily. By April 24 a considerable fleet had arrived, and, with the British and French admirals now on the spot, Lord Elgin and his colleagues felt it safe to send a further letter to Yu, the Secretary of State, to say that for six days they would await at Taku the arrival of a Chinese Plenipotentiary, but that if he failed to come, the allies would feel free to take what further action seemed necessary. But still Yu would not deign to reply directly ; on April 30 a letter came, not from him, but from Tan, the Governor-General of Chili, who had no power to treat. By this time seven warships had succeeded in crossing the bar ; and the appeal to force was imminent. On May 1 the ships were ready for action. Admiral Seymour had issued a general order outlining the plan of attack, and every one was eager for the fray ; but, at the last moment, the admirals decided that they must delay until they understood better the strength of



the forts, and for weeks still the ships lay supinely before the jeering and now defiant Chinese.

In truth, Lord Elgin's plan to advance up the Peiho was, in the end, all but pronounced impracticable by the naval authorities. When diplomacy had proved futile, and he and Baron Gros called upon the admirals to take the forts, they replied that, although some ships had crossed the bar, they had made no reconnaissance, and that they could give no promise to attack the forts; their intention, Lord Elgin thought, was to leave the Peiho without bringing the Imperial Government to terms. Naturally, at this, the man who was responsible for British policy in the East fretted and fumed. He had no control over the military and naval authorities; he could only bring to bear upon them the resources of his logic. "I had," he wrote later, "no instructions from . . . Government, except the intimation that they were desirous of finishing the affair, and that they left it to me to determine what the *honour* and the *commercial interests* of England required. . . . I struck out a plan which I firmly believed would enable me to accomplish *both* objects. . . . This plan consisted in a rapid move upon the capital by the route of Tientsin; a diplomatic move in the first instance, but so supported that it could, if necessary, repel hostility. I was perfectly satisfied that this plan, if carried boldly and rapidly into execution, would not be attended with any serious difficulty. I had therefore . . . the game in my hands.



Imagine my position when I found that the whole of my plan, with the important issues involved, was absolutely at the mercy of the naval authorities, who had resolved to thwart it."

Of course, Admirals Seymour and Rigault urged reasons to justify their hesitation at the last moment in adopting the plan of Lord Elgin ; that it was due to no lack of daring on the part of the naval officers was proved in the following year by the splendid, if reckless, courage of the allies in attacking these same forts ; that the danger was real was seen in the disastrous defeat of the assailants on that occasion. On the other hand, the admirals should not have risked sending so many ships into what might have proved a helpless position across the bar before they had finally resolved to follow up this advance. There was a controversy at the time which has now lost its interest. Unquestionably the *morale* of the Chinese was improved by the obvious hesitation of their assailants ; no doubt, too, the forts were made stronger during the delay. But in the end the admirals decided to carry out the first plan of attack, and the fleets joyfully welcomed the renewed assurance of a fight. Two gunboats, the *Nimrod* and the *Cormorant*, edged in closer and closer to the forts, hoping that the Chinese would precipitate action by firing on them. But the Chinese only waved flags, and shouted hoots and jeers and enticing invitations to "come on." At last the allies were in a position to make a



final demand. On May 17 more gunboats went dancing merrily over the bar, took up a position at long range, and waited. The *dénouement* was not to be until the next day. On the morning of the 20th, an English and a French naval officer, accompanied by Mr. Lay, an interpreter, landed, with the intimation that since the allies were determined to proceed up the river, in order to treat with the Emperor at a point nearer Pekin, the forts must for safety be in their hands, and that two hours would be given the Chinese to evacuate the forts and permit of their occupation by the allies. Such a demand the Chinese commander dared not accept. To yield would have meant execution by the Emperor's order ; to fight and fail could involve nothing worse, and, with a dark fate over him in any case, the Chinese leader resolved to fight.

The allied admirals waited the allotted time, and then, promptly at two o'clock, the ships were ordered to take up their positions. The English complained that the French had the best places, and that while, for the chief attack, four French gunboats were told off, the British had only two. But this was because the large French boats were better fitted for this than for the other tasks of the day ; in any case, the British had their share of the fighting. While the *Cormorant* was to break the boom and to attack the two forts on the north side, the *Nimrod's* work was against the three forts on the south.



After two o'clock there was a breathless pause for the signal to attack. It had hardly appeared when the *Cormorant*, well in advance of her French allies, dashed ahead ; with a shock and a stagger she went through the boom, but not before the Chinese forts opened fire. Taking up her position, she poured such a tempest of iron into the northern forts that within twenty minutes, and before the French ships came up, they were silenced. The *Nimrod*, aided by the French, was equally successful against the southern forts, and the loss was but slight. When the forts were nearly silenced, the next thing was to send in landing-parties to storm them. From the main-top of the *Nimrod* Oliphant watched the little British gunboats tow in the landing-parties of both nations, and, when the first blue-jacket jumped into a battery, he saw the terror of its surprised occupants, their headlong flight with outstretched arms, and Jack, with drawn cutlass, tearing after them. After an incredibly short time the forts were all in the hands of the victors.

Examination showed that though quite unscientific in plan, the forts were well armed, and built of solid masonry, faced by earth on the sea-front. Some of the guns were of good calibre and exquisite finish, and the supply of ammunition was adequate. But the Chinese, though proverbially indifferent to death, have, oddly enough, little courage to face danger ; they are not afraid to die, but they dread being half frightened to



death. Oliphant, always eager to be at the centre of interest, landed on the south side, and, after some weeks of canned provisions, he welcomed the repast of oranges and pomegranates which he found spread out in one of the Chinese tents. But even his light-hearted curiosity was shocked by the horrors of war. In one of the forts filled with French sailors there was a sudden explosion; some of the maddened occupants rushed out and threw themselves in their agony over the glacis into the muddy ditch at its base; one of them, crawling out on the opposite side more dead than alive, retained almost *in extremis* the national spirit; he feebly waved his cap over his head and shouted, "Vive l'Empereur, vive la France!" Nearly forty were seriously injured, and most of them died, but apart from this there were few casualties on the side of the allies. Oliphant joined a party which proceeded to the headquarters of the acting commandant of the forts; here was further tragedy, for this officer, Tehkwei, was found dead in his house with his throat cut; he had committed suicide to save himself from disgrace. At the village of Taku the allies might have cut off the retreating Chinese, but they desired only the possession of the forts. The villagers gathered in a group to watch the fight, and were apparently ready to be friendly with either side.

The work of taking the forts threw Lord Elgin into the background; for the time diplomacy was in suspense, and he had to wait patiently in the



*Furious* for the admirals to do their work. When the forts had been captured the next step was to proceed up the river to the great city of Tientsin, and, by menacing it, to show Pekin that even the capital was at the mercy of the allies. The only barrier to the approach of Tientsin was the possible difficulty of navigating the river. It winds through a low-lying plain in an exceeding complex way. At places it is very narrow—not wider than the Thames at Richmond—and the larger French gunboats found great difficulty in taking the curves. But the smaller and more powerful British boats had no trouble. Though they were able a little later to cover the whole distance in eight hours, on this first occasion the ascent to Tientsin took some days. So far as known, no foreign keel had ever before ploughed those waters, and as the flotilla slowly worked its way up, the interest of the inhabitants at the strange spectacle was intense. Squatting on the banks, they made a long blue line. Their dominant thought was that a new king had come to overthrow the old one; when approached they shouted, "Hail, O king! come and reign over us." At the prospect they showed every mark of goodwill, which is somewhat strange, since the one thing that seems to hold together the loose-jointed Chinese Empire is devotion to the emperor. But apparently it matters little who the emperor is, as long as he can command deference to his authority.



Lord Elgin still remained at Taku, but he sent the enterprising Oliphant up the river with the admirals, and instructed him to return when Tientsin was regarded as safe. The ascending ships cleared the river of the numerous junks, lest some of them should be sunk by the Chinese to bar the return of the gunboats—an unlikely contingency, as the Chinese would not wish to retain this plague of foreigners far up the river. From the dreary anchorage of the *Furious* Lord Elgin could see these junks crowding down the river, glad no doubt to escape so easily from the new danger. He could see also the onward course of the invading fleet, marked by flames from many stacks of straw standing near the river banks; these were burned lest they should furnish combustible material for the favourite Chinese device of fireships.

The impressive spectacle of night turned to day by these huge fires produced its due effect upon Tientsin. As the warships drew near that city, a committee of its magnates, with delightful Chinese *naïveté*, met the admirals to ask for a list of the commodities they had to sell and the prices, so that what they thought was the supreme aim of the newcomers, trade, might be effected without injury to the city. When told that the allies expected not trade but commissioners at Tientsin, they at once promised to send urgent messages to Peking. Lord Elgin's conviction that only by menacing Peking could the Chinese be brought to



their senses was now seen to be right. Hardly had the warships reached Tientsin when an Imperial Decree was received stating that two commissioners of the highest rank were setting out at once.

Meanwhile Oliphant hurried back to the *Furious*, making the journey in eight hours, and at once Lord Elgin and Baron Gros set out in a British gunboat for Tientsin. They passed up at night. To the Ambassador, whose coming might mean so much for weal or woe to this helpless people, the silent banks with their sleeping population were impressive. Though he saw the need of firm measures with China, in his own mind he was not wholly at ease as to the part the English were taking in the East among these timid, ignorant, and uncomplaining people. English traders had often done what, to a high-minded man like Lord Elgin, was profoundly disturbing. "I have an instinct in me," he said, 'which loves righteousness and hates iniquity, and all this keeps me in a perpetual boil.' But none the less was he prepared to beat the Chinese Government at its own game of haughty insolence, and he saw his path before him quite clearly.

The population of Tientsin, much interested by a startling novelty, lined the water's edge, and even waded in waist-deep to see the arrival of the Ambassadors. Lord Elgin took up his quarters in a temple, and made requisitions upon the



Chinese authorities for provisions, sometimes in arrogant terms, though he always paid for what he got. In order to impress the Chinese he surrounded himself with considerable ceremony. When obliged to make any official progress through the streets, he had a strong military guard, and was preceded on some occasions by a band whose music startled the orientals. The members of his suite moved about quite freely. They demanded horses from the authorities of Tientsin, and were promptly supplied with the offscourings of the city. When they incontinently rejected these, they secured at length fairly decent animals, as a reward for their insistence.

The city itself was not attractive. The streets indeed were better and wider than those of a southern city like Canton, but they were utterly squalid, with everywhere signs of loathsome disease and callousness to suffering.

"The banks of the river," says Oliphant, "swarmed with men who lived entirely on the garbage and offal that were flung from the ships, or were swept up by the tide from the city. There was an eddy just in front of our yamun, in which dead cats, etc., used to gyrate, and into which stark-naked figures were constantly plunging in search of some delicate morsel. Their clothing generally consisted of a piece of mat or tattered sacking, which they wore, not round their waist, but thrown negligently over their shoulders—it was difficult to divine for what purpose, as decency was ignored, and in the month of June



warmth was not a desideratum. Cutaneous diseases of the most loathsome character met the eye in the course of the shortest walk, and objects so frightful that their vitality seemed a mockery of existence shocked the coarsest sensibilities. Upon several occasions I saw life ebbing from some wretched sufferer as he lay at his post of mendicancy. One old woman, in particular, attracted my attention. She used to lie motionless on a mat in the centre of the road, a diseased skeleton. She had just strength enough to clutch at cash that was flung at her. One day this strength seemed to have failed; I looked closer, and she was dead. A few hours after, I repassed; but her place knew her no more: she had been carried away and cast upon a dung-heap. I was riding on the outskirts of the city one day, and saw a man carrying another on his back. At first I thought the burden was a corpse; but, as I approached nearer, a certain flexibility of the legs, as they trailed in the dust behind, undeceived me. This was one of the city scavengers who prowl the streets for dying beggars, and when they find one in whom life is almost extinct, they bear him off to some suburban Aceldama, and fling him from their shoulders, a premature feast for crows and vultures. Certainly, if the imagination of the Chinaman who named this city Tientsin, 'heavenly spot,' could form no higher idea of an abode of bliss, it is difficult to conceive what must have been his notion of the opposite extreme."

Oliphant and his companions took long rides in the country, and one day, going towards Peking,



they saw approaching on the highway the dust of a great *cortège*. The people who happened to be on the road brought themselves to the attitude of "attention" that German navvies assume when a train is passing; runners preceding the *cortège* cleared the way and pressed back the people on each side; and then in two stately chairs carried by eight bearers passed the two Commissioners, Kweiliang and Hwashana, sent at last to treat with the invaders. A dusty crowd of followers and a number of baggage waggons brought up the rear. In the person of these Commissioners Lord Elgin seemed now directly in touch with the Emperor's Government, but force alone had effected this result. More troops were hurrying north from Hong Kong; Peking was at his mercy. Yet even now any sign of weak resolution or of yielding would lead the Chinese once more to be arrogant and unbinding.

When a formal interview was arranged to exchange powers, Lord Elgin determined to make it an imposing ceremonial. The place of meeting was a temple in an open plain two and a half miles distant. On an intensely hot afternoon the procession set out—twelve chairs, a guard of 150 marines, and the band of the *Calcutta*. A dense crowd lined the streets, but Lord Elgin notes that not a single woman was visible; along the narrow thoroughfares the procession went, drums beating, the band playing, and the crowd divided between emotions of excitement and fear



at the strange spectacle. Even Chinese impassive dignity must have felt some misgivings when 150 bearded men filed into the inmost court of the "Temple of Oceanic Influences," and at the hoarse word of command, to the beating of the big drum, let their muskets come down with a ringing clank upon the pavement.

Then the business proceeded. The senior Commissioner, Kweiliang, was a venerable person, the second of the great officials of the Empire; his colleague, Hwashana, a younger man, was also of high rank, and conspicuous as a scholar and a poet—distinctions that command more general respect in China than in Europe. Since duplicity is normal in Chinese diplomacy, Lord Elgin knew that he must be ceaselessly alert; he knew too that the Chinese would believe that he meant what he said only if he made his demands imperiously. Having some doubt whether the Commissioners had full powers, he determined to test this at once. When his own powers from his Sovereign had been read, Kweiliang, holding the paper reverently over his head before unfolding it, produced the Commissioners' powers, signed by the Emperor's own hand. Though Mr. Wade, who translated it, declared that the powers were fairly large, there was one defect—the Commissioners had not the Kwang-fang, a seal of office given to high officials. When Lord Elgin sternly called attention to this defect, the Chinese Commissioners declared that only permanent officials



received the Kwang-fang. But Lord Elgin had found his opportunity to play the part of the "intractable barbarian;" he rose abruptly, declaring that the Commissioners had not satisfied him as to their powers, refused proffered refreshment, and, amid something like panic on the part of the Chinese, re-entered his chair. The band and the marines filed away as they had come; Tientsin had the second sensation of a foreign procession through its streets, and as evening fell Lord Elgin reached his quarters. His policy proved entirely successful. The seal Kwang-fang came promptly from Peking, and thenceforth business proceeded satisfactorily.

Lord Elgin demanded persistently two things—that a British Minister should have the right to reside permanently at Peking, and that British subjects might travel to all parts of the empire for trading purposes. He made these demands in addition to those insisting among other things on indemnity for losses at Canton; on the disuse of the term "barbarians" in official documents as describing British subjects; and on the cancelling of a variety of vexatious duties, which were to be replaced by one *ad valorem* duty of two and a half per cent. The first two demands were the most difficult, for they meant the end of Chinese seclusion; almost with tears Kweiliang and his colleague urged that the Emperor would put them to death if they conceded these points. But though Lord Elgin saw the dangers of their position, he



remained relentless, especially in regard to the right of sending a Minister to Peking, which would, he knew, be a wholesome check upon the Emperor. The right need not, of course, be used, unless by arbitrary conduct the Court made it necessary for an envoy to beard the Emperor in his own capital. The Russian and the American Ministers tried to get Lord Elgin to abandon this claim ; his French colleague took the same attitude, and it is an instructive study in character to see how the man who, in Canada, had been charged with want of courage in a situation where he was called upon to efface himself, in China persisted in his demands in spite of the opposition of his own friends. His principle in dealing with the Chinese was to ask only what was just, and then not to abate one jot in his demands ; to yield on one point was, he knew, to arouse Chinese hopes on a dozen others. In the end he secured the promise of all that he asked, and what he gained the other Powers of course also gained.

By June 26 final terms had been arranged, and Tientsin saw another imposing array. To the "Temple of Oceanic Influences" Lord Elgin again went, this time with a force of 400 men and a procession half a mile long, and there with great ceremony the Treaty of Tientsin was signed, on the fifteenth anniversary of that of Nankin, which had closed the previous trouble with China. On this occasion the British Ambassador



accepted refreshments ; but he had to complain that his own following did not behave properly. "I had told the admiral that any of the officers of the squadron who liked to see the ceremony might attend, and this was made the excuse for the presence of a disorderly crowd, who rushed into the place where we signed the treaty, mobbed the Imperial Commissioners, stole the teacups, in short, conducted themselves very ill." In due course the procession reformed, and at dark Lord Elgin reached his yamun, feeling that he had won a great success.

The treaty provided for the reception of a resident Minister at Peking, and permitted British subjects to travel and trade in all parts of the empire. Some new ports were opened as places of residence, among them, New-Chang in Manchuria ; China was to pay about £1,300,000 for losses at Canton, and for the expenses of the war ; within a year from the date of signature the formal ratifications of the treaty were to be exchanged at Peking. Time was to show that it was not enough to make the Chinese sign a treaty, and Lord Elgin's critics have urged that, eager to leave Tientsin, he too readily accepted Chinese assurances. His work was still incomplete, for details of the commercial provisions remained to be adjusted, and to him it seemed that these could be settled as well at Shanghai as at Tientsin. But undoubtedly it would have been better to settle everything at Tientsin, and as a



final evidence of good faith to insist upon being received by the Emperor at Peking. By specious promises Lord Elgin was really duped into believing that the difficulties with China were at last ended, when, in truth, only the presence of foreign troops at Peking effected what he thought he had secured. But, on the other hand, it would not have been easy at the time to go to Peking, for the season was already late, and, moreover, the Canton province was proving so troublesome that the available military force was required there.

Lord Elgin went back to Shanghai as soon as possible, and, while the Chinese Commissioners were preparing to meet him there, he turned to another branch of his work in the East. Before leaving Britain he had been instructed to negotiate, if possible, a treaty with Japan, which was still coyly holding aloof as far as possible from the advances of other nations. A beautiful steam yacht had been sent out as a present for the Japanese ruler, and now Lord Elgin found an opportunity to carry out this mission. Not without uneasiness did he leave China. In the south, the Peking Government was already violating its promises ; incited by it, the Chinese "Braves" were harassing Canton, and more ships and troops were required to overawe them. Yet since, in the military movements, the Ambassador could have little place, for a brief period he was free to turn northward. On the last day of July, 1858, he



and his suite, with keen delight in the prospect of new and more attractive scenes, set out in the *Furious*, and the short 450 miles that separate Shanghai from Nagasaki in Japan proved to be the passage to a wholly new world.



## CHAPTER IV

### MISSION TO JAPAN, 1858

**O**N August 3, 1858, Lord Elgin's squadron, consisting of three warships, the *Furious*, the *Retribution*, and the *Lee*, steamed up the beautiful series of channels dotted with islands that led to Nagasaki, a port in the far east of Japan remote from the capital. "I have seen nothing so beautiful in point of scenery for many a long day," Lord Elgin wrote. On each side were rugged and bold hills, but, where human labour was possible, the Japanese had made of the land a garden.

"Here a village," writes Captain Sherard Osborn,\* "there a quaint bark anchored in a sandy cove; now an official abode with square-cut terrace and upright fence, so properly stiff-starched and queer, you felt sure you had only to knock and that one of the barnacles of society would appear; then, nestling in the midst of green trees and flowery gardens, were the prettiest châteaux seen out of Switzerland; children

\* "A Cruise in Japanese Waters;" a series of articles published first in *Blackwood's Magazine*, 1858 and 1859, and republished in the author's collected works. He commanded the *Furious*.



with no clothes at all, rolling on the grass or tumbling in and out of the water; whilst their respected parents with but few habiliments to incommode them gravely waved their fans, or sat gazing upon the newly arrived vessels. Oh! it was a goodly sight."

Apart from the beauty of the scenery, the most impressive spectacle for the visitors was the multitude of guns and batteries frowning from every height and protecting every landing-place. As the ships approached, the garrisons of the batteries went to the guns, to show how well prepared they were, and sat quietly smoking their pipes while the officers on the parapets watched the progress of the visitors. Compared with European armaments the defences, though in some cases obviously solid, were no doubt poor enough, but their elaborate character showed Japan in 1858 to be a military nation.

Nagasaki was the one place in Japan familiar at this time to the foreigner; and, carrying out a persistent resolve of exclusion, as complete as possible, from the outside world, the desire of the Japanese Government was to hold intercourse with other Governments there, and there only. At Nagasaki the Dutch had long traded, but under the severest restrictions. The penalty to the Japanese for unauthorized trading with them was death, and only under the most exacting supervision could a Dutchman leave his quarters on the little island of Deshima, three acres in



extent, to which his countrymen were confined, and go abroad in the town. But this system was now much relaxed. As the squadron steamed up to the narrow entrance of the harbour, an official, sitting at ease, reading, on the deck of a Japanese boat, waved a fan as a signal for the intruders to stop. It was unheeded, and the official, who appeared to expect this result, continued to read without showing further concern. But if he was unconcerned others were not. Japanese boats in pairs followed the ships; one pair of boats was navigated skilfully in the wash of the paddle wheels, while a zealous observer stood up, peered into the port-holes, and shouted out his observations to shorthand writers with such success that, as the visitors learned, he missed noting but one gun in the armament of the *Furious*.\*

When the ships had anchored, though the Japanese boats still hovered about, not one came near for a time, and the Dutch at Deshima showed no signs of consciousness that a British squadron had arrived. The truth was that the Dutch were in bed for their midday siesta. But when a boat went in to arouse them, and the rank of the Ambassador was made known, all was activity.

\* Captain Osborn cites an amusing instance of the minute work done by these guardians. A certain chaplain having at Yedo passed beyond the limits prescribed for foreigners, an official notification of his transgression was handed to him. This is what the observers reported: "On receiving the letter he stopped, read it, went on a short distance, stopped again, opened the letter, and then returned."



"A boat-load of Japanese officials . . . came crowding on the deck in the most easy, unembarrassed manner imaginable, smiling blandly, and affably, and talking Dutch, which, however, nobody on board understood." Their inquisitiveness knew no bounds. They wanted to know the name, rank, age, and business of all on board, where they had come from, what they wanted, and where they were going. But it was done with such charming good-nature and courtesy that the visitors were delighted with their reception. So little was known of Japan that they had expected to find barbarism, where there was in fact a highly developed civilization. The Japanese, wrote Lord Elgin, are "the nicest people possible." Though uncommunicative about all things Japanese, the officials, who wore two swords sticking out behind like stiff double tails, were courteous, and perhaps tried to make Nagasaki as attractive as possible so that Lord Elgin might be content to go nowhere else. The city of Nagasaki itself was in vivid contrast with what the visitors had seen in China.

"Instead of an indefinite congeries of houses," writes Oliphant, "built apparently on no settled plan, and so close together that the streets which divided them are completely concealed, we saw before us a wide, spacious street, about a mile in length, flanked by neat houses, generally of two stories, with tiled or wooden roofs, and broad eaves projecting over the lower story. A *pavé*



ran down the centre of the street, on each side of which it was carefully gravelled to the gutters. No wheeled vehicle, or beast of burden, was however visible, but in default a plentiful sprinkling of foot-passengers gave it an air of life and animation. It terminated in the distance in a flight of steps, which soon disappeared amid the foliage of the hillside, crowned with a temple or tea-house, or gleaming with the white-washed walls of some fireproof store-house. As we traversed its entire length, no foul odours assailed our nostrils, or hideous cutaneous objects offended our eyesight; nor did inconvenient walls or envious shutters debar us from inspecting, as we passed along, the internal economy of the shops and dwellings on each side. Light wooden screens, neatly papered and running on slides, are for the most part pushed back in the daytime, and the passer-by looks through the house to where the waving shrubs of a cool-looking back-garden invite him to extend his investigations."

We now understand that the Japanese are perhaps the cleanest nation in the world; among the sights of Nagasaki nothing more impressed the visitors than the bathing habits of the people. After the day's work every one took a hot bath. Lord Elgin observed with some astonishment what has since surprised other visitors, the absence of the sense of modesty in some, at least, of the Japanese women, even of the upper classes. The weather was hot, and men and women alike wore but little clothing. "To judge by the amount of clothes worn by both sexes," says



Lord Elgin, "it does not seem that there will be any great demand for Manchester cotton goods. I cannot say what it will be in winter, but in summer they seem to place a very filial reliance on nature." With complete unconcern ladies bathed in tubs placed at the front of their houses in sight of the world, or if their bath was not so favourably situated for observation, they rushed naked and steaming from it to gaze at the strangers as they passed. "I never saw a place where the cleanliness of the fair sex was established on such unimpeachable ocular evidence."

In China, on every side, Lord Elgin had seen incompetence, stagnation, and decay; in Japan he found alertness, vigour, and strength. The seamen in the port, stout-built and brawny men, challenged the British sailors to races as they rowed to their ships, and every one was eager to learn any new utility that the visitors would explain.\* A Russian officer at Nagasaki spoke

\* The friendly feeling between the seamen of the two countries, now so marked, was conspicuous from the first. The British Jack called his Japanese brother "Johnny." "On one occasion," says Captain Osborn, "turning a corner rather abruptly, we found a jolly foretopman explaining by signs that he wanted something to pour down his throat that would make him dance, whereupon he cut a double shuffle and reeled about the yard. Johnny perfectly understood, and repeated the performance. Jack's broad face beamed with delight. 'Yes, that's it, grog! Come, bear a hand, my fine fellow!' he exclaimed; and in anticipation of his want being quickly supplied, he expressed in strongest vernacular his high approval of the Johnnies in general. Happily, for the Johnnies, we arrived in time to stay further proceedings, and sending for Yenoske, the interpreter, we made him explain that



to Lord Elgin's party in admiring terms of the perfect military organization of the Empire, by which the entire male population made up a vast army, a fact that was to prove full of meaning to his own land in the far future.

When Lord Elgin had seen more of the country, he wrote: "The total absence of anything like want among the people; their joyous though polite and respectful demeanour; the combination of that sort of neatness and finish, which we attain in England by the expenditure of great wealth, with tropical luxuriance, made me feel that at last I had found something which entirely surpassed all the expectations I had formed. And I am bound to say that the social and moral condition of Japan has astounded me quite as much as its material beauty. Every man, from the Emperor (who never leaves his palace) to the humblest labourer, lives under a rigid rule prescribed by law and custom combined; and the Government, through its numerous agents, among whom are hosts of spies, or more properly

Jack upon water, or Jack upon tea, was as harmless as a baby; but that Jack in a state of grog was simply an infuriated Briton, an animal . . . very certain to break the peace. 'Ah!' said Yenoske—'Ah! all the same as drunken Dutch sailor.' 'Worse,' we asserted, 'than fifty Dutchmen.' 'All the same one tiger,' suggested Yenoske, looking very serious. We told him that tigers the worse for liquor could not be more troublesome. Whereupon Yenoske explained to his countrymen the effect of grog upon our men in such strong terms that neither for love nor money could they get anything stronger than tea, and we were happy, if Jack was not."



inspectors (for there is no secrecy or concealment about this proceeding), exercises a close surveillance over the acts of each individual; but, in so far as one can judge, this system is not felt to be burdensome by any. All seem to think it the most natural thing in the world that they should move in the orbit in which they are placed. . . . There is no luxury or extravagance in any class. No jewels or gold ornaments even at Court; but the nobles have handsome palaces, and large bodies of retainers. A perfectly paternal Government; a perfectly filial people; a community entirely self-supporting; peace within and without; no want; no ill-will between classes. This is what I find in Japan in the year 1858, after a two hundred years' exclusion of foreign trade and foreigners. Twenty years hence, what will be the contrast?"

For more than two hundred years Japan had been making an experiment of profound interest, that of sufficing entirely for herself, and living secluded from the outer world. Though the Dutch, as we have seen, and also the Chinese, had long traded at Nagasaki, and Japan's reserve was not complete, she still was able to hold aloof from the rest of the world to a very striking extent. Since the penalty to the Japanese who went abroad was death, few ventured to take such terrible risks.\* Between other nations and

\* At Yedo the only Japanese whom Lord Elgin found able to speak English was nicknamed "The Scoundrel," in compliment



Japan there were no regular means of communication, such as a present-day postal system involves ; little of what happened elsewhere penetrated to Japan. The result was, of course, great ignorance of other conditions, but it speaks well for the high intelligence of the Japanese that they never sank, as did the Chinese mandarins, into complete contempt for, and neglect of, all other peoples. Standing apart from the larger world, the more intelligent of them yet studied it with what defective means they could command, and the result was that upon some of them had now dawned the truth that the Japanese were living in a fool's paradise ; that no matter what they wished, other nations would not leave them unmolested ; and that, compared with a great European state, Japan was pitifully equipped to defend herself. For two hundred years she had stood still, while the European states had developed mighty resources, which they could, and probably would, readily use to coerce her.

Historically, if not, as Lord Elgin soon found, politically, Nagasaki was to Europeans the centre of interest in Japan, for there European thought had most deeply affected the Japanese. When, early in the sixteenth century, western ships, for the first time in history, began to frequent the Pacific Ocean, it was inevitable that they should

to his sinister character. He spoke with a nasal twang acquired in California, yet, for his own safety, he persistently denied that he had ever been out of Japan.



visit every coast of the unknown East. The Spaniards soon took possession of the Philippines; the Portuguese as promptly established themselves at Macao, near Canton, in China. Further north the traders of both countries were bound to go. By 1542 the Portuguese had reached Japan, where they received a cordial welcome. At that time the Japanese were the chief maritime nation of the Far East, and were so much at home upon the ocean that they were called the "Kings of the Sea." Themselves accustomed to seek foreign shores, they were at first delighted when other peoples visited them. Since the Portuguese found a welcome, the Spaniards quickly followed them to Japan, and in time other rivals appeared. Soon the conflicts raging in Europe affected Japan. Before the end of the sixteenth century Philip of Spain had annexed Portugal to his dominions, and engaged in his long struggle to crush the two Protestant states, England and Holland. They were equally aggressive in attacking him, and not only in Europe but in Asia, too, the bitter contest went on. The Dutch and English attacked and soon destroyed Portuguese influence in India and the adjacent islands, and the Dutch in particular followed the Portuguese to Japan, where each side intrigued with the Japanese against the other.

With Portuguese traders to Japan had gone, also, Christian missionaries. At the time of the rise of the Japanese mission the Jesuit order was



beginning its remarkable work in Europe. When the news came of regions in the East open to Christian effort, François Xavier, perhaps the noblest figure in the history of the Order, resolved to go thither to devote his great powers to missionary work. He went to Japan, and there helped to establish a Christian Church. It so happened that Buddhism, a faith which came to Japan from India, was at this time unpopular. The Buddhist priests had secured immense possessions in the country, and power had the familiar effect of making them selfish and arrogant. Their numbers were enormous. In a single town, Hiyei-zan, dwelt between twenty and thirty thousand Buddhist monks. Since these monks were really warriors, exacting, turbulent, ready to fight for their privileges, the civil powers learned to dread their influence, and thus it happened that in Japan, as in Europe in the sixteenth century, the time was ripe for revolt against the ancient faith.

Thus favoured by circumstances the Christian mission made rapid progress. By the end of the sixteenth century some of the daimios or nobles had become professed Christians, and at one time the converts in all classes numbered about six hundred thousand. But in Japan, as in Europe during that age, intolerance and persecution dominated political and religious life. The Christian daimios tried to coerce their people into the acceptance of Christianity. On the other hand,



there was a natural reaction against the new faith. With the jealousy of an insular people, the Japanese feared that the Christian missions were but the forerunners of graver foreign aggressions against Japan and her liberties, and these fears the attitude of the Jesuits encouraged. In their fierce zeal, the priests spurned compromise, and denounced all other systems as outcast. They spoke of themselves as the servants of a remote ruler, the Pope, and asserted that his sway included the Japanese; converts in Japan sometimes claimed that they were no longer under the jurisdiction of the native Government. Naturally Japan's rulers grew jealous, and finally, in 1614, in defence of Japanese nationality, they adopted the policy of expelling all foreign teachers, of crushing out the Christian religion, and of shutting up Japan from further intrusion. It was precisely the same spirit that animated the European nations of the time in regard to alien systems and alien creeds. But Japan, self-contained within her sea-frontier, went further than any of them ventured to go. Intercourse with the rest of the world was to cease for ever. The destruction of all vessels of sea-going capacity was ordered, and henceforth no ships were to be built large enough to go beyond home waters.

Nagasaki alone had contained some forty thousand Christians, but the work of persecution, resulting from Japan's policy, was carried on with such ruthless vigour that by 1629 Japanese



officials could report that not a single Christian was left in the place. Though the annals of the Christian Church record too many fanatical horrors, the ferocity of the persecution in Japan has hardly been equalled elsewhere. Christians, native and foreign, were executed in batches with every ferocity that might emphasize the mischievous character of their teaching. They were crucified, they were burnt alive, they were broiled on gridirons, delicate women were stripped naked and cruelly tortured in public. To show their skill and the wonderful temper of their weapons, Japanese swordsmen sometimes amused themselves by slicing the bodies of Christian criminals into small fragments. Only the avowed enemies of the Roman Catholic missionaries, the Dutch, were allowed to remain in the country, but even they stayed under narrow and humiliating restrictions that amounted to slavery. After 1641 they remained like prisoners at Deshima. When the Dutch envoy was received by the Shogun, he crawled on his hands and knees to the place indicated to him, and accepted the extremest forms of oriental abasement.

Lord Elgin's party surveyed Deshima with much interest. The Japanese would not permit the Dutch who dwelt there to have arms, and, in their hatred of Christianity, would not even allow them to bring a Bible into the country; on the arrival of ships at the entrance of the harbour, the Bibles on board were collected and kept



securely in a chest, in Japanese care, until the voyagers departed, when they were restored to their owners. Survivals of the long persecution of Christianity the visitors might have seen for themselves; the public notice-boards of the towns and villages of the empire still warned the Japanese against that religion as against other atrocious crimes.

Japan was still a feudal state with a weak central Government of the type familiar to Europe in the Middle Ages. Each of some three hundred nobles, the class known as daimios, made his own laws, raised and employed at will his own revenues, looked upon himself as an autocrat in his own territory, and was jealous of intervention from the Shogun at Yedo. The Shogun himself, though he administered the central government, was in fact only the Mayor of the Palace to the real Emperor, looked upon as of half divine ancestry, who had been superseded in the active administration of the country, and dwelt in mystic isolation at Kyoto, where he was thought so completely the Son of Heaven that his foot was never allowed to touch the ground. In religious affairs, the authority of this secluded Emperor, the Mikado, was still very real, and even in secular affairs time was soon to show that he wielded a power in the country which the Shogun could not rival. Lines of Shoguns had, it is true, long carried on the government; but the feudal daimios were jealous of them, and their



authority was not deeply rooted in the religious veneration which always plays a great part in a nation's life. By 1858, when Lord Elgin appeared on the scene, the shogunate was distinctly on the decline ; in 1868 it disappeared completely. Yet so profound was Europe's ignorance of Japan, that Lord Elgin thought the Shogun the one supreme secular ruler. It was with him that he treated. Of the Mikado he heard almost nothing, and until he went to Yedo he scarcely knew what a daimio was.

The disputes of the Europeans with China, and their coercion of that country, had not been lost upon the more discerning minds in Japan, who perceived that her turn would come next. Though as individual fighters, with their skilful sword practice and highly tempered steel, the Japanese were even then not to be despised, their whole equipment was now outclassed by Europe. Vested interests in Japan opposed change, but there were students who understood her needs and were ready to meet the foreigners half way. Already a political party was getting ready for the future. Oliphant describes one of this class whom he met at Yedo—

“I was fortunate enough to sit next Higono-kami at lunch, and we employed ourselves in making a vocabulary on his fan. Though he had never seen a foreigner, until within the last few months, in his life, he could write in the English character, and was very quick in picking up



and retaining the correct pronunciation of every vowel I told him. He informed me that he was qualifying himself to be appointed one of the ambassadors to be sent to Europe, and anxious in consequence to lose no opportunity of learning English. I saw him almost every day during the remainder of my stay in Yedo, and he generally used to repeat without a mistake the lesson of the day before. He was infinitely more interested in studying English than in watching the progress of the negotiations, and carried perpetually about in his bosom a stock of fans which contained his vocabulary."

It was the United States that first knocked loudly at the door of Japan. When as a result of the war with Mexico the United States finally secured California, her interest in the Pacific was enormously increased. Across the Pacific, Japan was her nearest neighbour. American whaling ships cruising in Japanese waters had been barbarously treated by the Japanese. American trade, too, was enterprising and aggressive. So in 1853 it came about that the United States Government resolved to send an expedition with a firm demand that the old isolation should cease, and that Japan should, like China, make terms with the foreigner. In July, 1853, Commodore Perry, commanding four warships, and with decks cleared for action, entered Yedo Bay, and dropped anchor off Uraga. This bold action caused a violent flutter among the Japanese officials. At their anchorage on the first night the visitors saw



beacon fires burning from every hilltop ; a signal bell tolled ceaselessly, and it was obvious that the Japanese were profoundly impressed. They plucked up courage to send Perry a peremptory intimation that he anchored at his peril, and that only at Nagasaki could they have any dealings with him. His answer was that he would not go to Nagasaki ; that he had come with a letter from the President of the United States to the Emperor of Japan ; that the insult of refusing to receive a friendly letter from the ruler of a great neighbouring state was not to be tolerated, and that if an official of suitable rank were not sent to receive the communication he would land a sufficient force to deliver it to the Emperor in person. At the same time, though, in view of the ominous movements of troops on shore, no one ventured to land, he quietly sent out boats to survey the bay for the benefit of himself and future navigators.

The Japanese knew they were helpless, with artillery and fortifications alike feeble against powerful warships. But danger menaced the Shogun, whether he yielded or did not yield. To make a treaty with the United States was to arouse intense resentment among the more than half-independent daimios, still resolved to maintain Japan's seclusion ; their soldiery flocked to the capital eager to fight the foreigners. Yet, on the other hand, Commodore Perry's urgency could not be resisted. He refused any compromise, kept his decks ready for action, and



meanwhile went on quietly surveying the bay, and resolutely declined to accept anything short of an official reception of his letter. The Government yielded. On July 14, with American warships commanding the place of landing, Commodore Perry was ceremoniously entertained on shore at Gorahama, near Uraga. Two princes of the Japanese Empire\* were present to receive the letter of President Fillmore. Yet, in spite of this, little seemed to have been accomplished. The Japanese now said to Perry, "As the letter has been received you can depart." Any answer to the letter, they declared, would be long in coming, since it was the "custom of the Japanese Government to be very slow in deciding matters relating to foreign countries." But Perry was not to be baulked. It is true that since he was short of water and provisions, and also desired to assemble a greater force, he was willing to give the Japanese some months to deliberate, but he went away declaring that in a short time he should return to receive an answer to the friendly advances of the United States.

In February, 1854, Perry reappeared; this time with nine ships, a renewed menace which the Japanese well understood. He did not remain at Uraga, but went further up the bay to Yokohama, and soon his boats were busy with further surveys. With his formidable array drawn

\* It was afterwards asserted that persons of low rank had been palmed off on Commodore Perry as "princes."





THE FIRST LANDING OF THE AMERICAN EXPEDITION IN JAPAN (AT GORAHAMA)







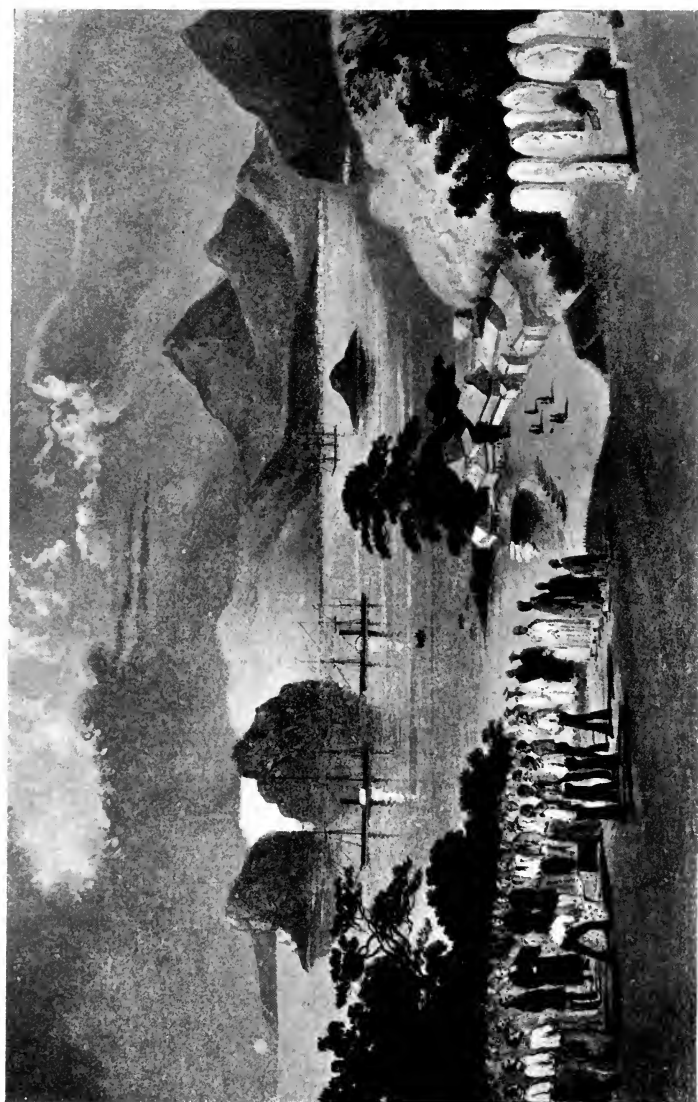
up in line of battle commanding the shore, he declared he was ready to meet the Japanese commissioners ; if they would not come to Yokohama, he would anchor still nearer the capital. He demanded that his men be given permission for the exercise on shore necessary to health, and, when a marine died, he insisted that a burial-place should be provided. But though compelled to yield these points, the Japanese still fought shy of a treaty. The Shogun had died during Perry's absence, and they declared that his successor was not yet prepared to take up new business. It is odd now to read their further plea when China's example was urged : "The Japanese are unlike the Chinese. They are averse to change, and when they make a compact of any kind, they intend it shall endure for one thousand years." Their diplomacy was not remarkable for truthfulness, but nothing could prevail against Commodore Perry's straightforward insistence, and, finally yielding to pressure that had behind it adequate force, the Japanese signed a treaty. Limited enough it was ; it permitted Americans to resort for provisions, wood, water, etc., to two, and only two, ports—Simoda, not far from Yedo, but separated from it by considerable mountains, and Hakodate in the far north-east. In case of storm American ships might take refuge in Japanese ports, but no access to the interior of the country was allowed, and no provisions were made for international trade. Britain, Russia, and Holland



promptly claimed similar privileges, which Japan yielded, but on the express condition that no further concessions should be asked. "When this convention shall have been ratified," runs the treaty, "no high officer coming to Japan shall alter it."

Commodore Perry had steadily refused to accept Nagasaki as a treaty port, for there the Dutch were under restrictions which, as representing the United States, he declined absolutely to consider. No longer, therefore, was Nagasaki to be the only port for foreign intercourse. At Simoda, in August, 1856, under the terms of the treaty, Mr. Townsend Harris, with a Dutch interpreter, Mr. Heuksen, took up his residence. It was a lonely exile. For more than a year Mr. Harris remained without a letter from the outside world, and the Japanese, still unconvinced, tried to make his position unendurable. Spies lived in his house, and dogged every step he took when he went for a walk. If he wished to hire a Japanese boy, he was told that the matter must be referred to Yedo. Difficulties were put in the way of his buying provisions. He was not once invited to a Japanese house, and when he invited some of the Japanese to dine with him on New Year's Day, they all declined. If he inquired about the natural products of Japan, he received lying answers. Though a true friend of Japan, and an admirer of her industrious people, he came to believe that





LIMA, FROM THE AMERICAN GRAVEYARD







the Japanese were the greatest liars in the world. Their immorality also shocked him. He saw lascivious pictures even in their temples, shameless figures and models were exposed to public view in the streets, and their popular literature was full of obscene illustrations.

In spite of obstructions, Mr. Harris made immense progress in dealing with Japan. Insisting upon his rights as the representative of a great state, he drove the spies from his house, and complained with some effect if they dogged him when he went out. Circumstances aided him. When, in 1857, the allies took Canton, the Japanese saw that their own turn might come soon. At last the Shogun consented to receive Mr. Harris, who, at the end of the year 1857, with much pomp and ceremony, made a progress by land across the mountainous country between Simoda and Yedo, into which city his official entry caused a profound sensation. It is amusing to read how he made a reputation at Yedo for universal wisdom, when, noting that the Japanese were fond of dogs, he told the Prince of Shinano that, if a dog had any white hair about him, the tip of his tail would be also white; for some time at Yedo nobles and their retainers were close observers of dogs, and Mr. Harris's rule was, he says, vindicated. But the work of treaty making advanced very slowly. The Japanese could hardly bring themselves to improve upon the concessions to Commodore Perry, and Mr. Harris returned



to Simoda with little but promises. But his alert intelligence seized a new opportunity when Britain had crushed the revolt in India, and the allies had humbled China at the mouth of the Peiho. On July 23, 1858, he received word by a United States warship at Simoda of the capture of the Taku forts, and of the Treaty of Tientsin as its result; he learned besides that a Russian fleet had already gone to Japan, and that British and other fleets were about to proceed thither. With the news he hurried to Kanagawa, near Yedo. This time, before a new menace, the Japanese Government acted promptly. They had long been debating the terms which they could offer to foreigners, and on July 29, 1858, they signed a liberal commercial treaty with the United States. Two days after the date of this treaty Lord Elgin set out for Japan.

Such was the situation when he arrived. Since he was due again in China within a few weeks, he was working against time, and he found that at remote Nagasaki no one could speak with authority. When, as a mark of courtesy, the British proposed to salute the Japanese flag with twenty-one guns, the officials at Nagasaki were delighted, but pleasure turned to dismay when the necessity of a return salute was urged. "Japan cannot salute. The Government has given no authority to do so." Every novel suggestion was met in the same way, and so to the Government itself Lord Elgin saw that



he must go. When the British warship *Calcutta* followed him to Nagasaki with the yacht *Emperor*, which he was to hand over to the Japanese at Yedo, thither he resolved to proceed at once. Some of his officers talked of taking their ships to the city itself, but their new Dutch friends scoffed at the difficulty of overcoming both the dangers of the unknown waters before Yedo, and the hostility of the Japanese to the project.

On the 5th the squadron headed away from Nagasaki.\* As they approached the open sea a storm overtook them, and for thirty-six hours, under the high cliffs near Cape Chichakoff, they lay in danger and discomfort. A great Dutch trader which they met near Nagasaki was

\* Captain Osborn of the *Furious* had read what he could of Japanese history, and as he passed out of the harbour of Nagasaki he was reminded of some of the stories of Japanese valour with which it is associated. One old tale illustrates Japanese tenacity as it has subsequently come before the world. A great Spanish three-decker from the Philippines sailed into Nagasaki harbour to trade. But, because of an outrage on a Japanese ship in the Philippines a year earlier, the Emperor of Japan had forbidden Spanish ships to approach his shores. When the Spanish captain showed a lofty disregard of this prohibition, Japanese boats surrounded him; nimble warriors clambered up his ship's tall sides to the upper deck, where there was a terrific struggle. At length the Spaniards blew up the upper deck, and hurled their assailants into the water. But these returned doggedly, and won the second deck. When this in turn was blown up by the defenders, the third deck was attacked, and in the end the galleon, with defenders and assailants alike, sank in the bloody waters, the Japanese losing three thousand men in the fight. No doubt the details of the story are largely imaginary, but they show what was thought of the Japanese as a fighting people when the Dutch physician Kaempfer, who was in Japan in 1691, wrote down the tale.



wrecked ; the *Lee* disappeared ; there were disquieting doubts as to her safety, but in the end she rejoined the squadron at Yedo. Steaming eastward for some days, on the 10th Lord Elgin reached the land-locked harbour of Simoda, looked upon as a kind of outpost to Yedo, but a quiet obscure place of less than ten thousand inhabitants, and with no promise of commerce ; perhaps, indeed, it was for this reason that the reluctant Japanese had made it a treaty port. At Simoda, from a flagstaff near a Buddhist temple, the visitors saw floating the Stars and Stripes of the United States. Mr. Townsend Harris had just returned from Yedo, having concluded the treaty which was to prove the basis of foreign intercourse with Japan for many years to come.

Mr. Harris had been taught from childhood "to tell the truth, fear God, and hate the British ;" so strong were his prejudices that he would never use a Sheffield knife, nor wear British cloth ; but he knew that in treating for the United States he was treating for other nations as well, and he received the British Ambassador cordially.

"I made great friends with the American," writes Lord Elgin, "and the result is that he has lent me his own interpreter, who is now beside me, translating into Dutch a letter from me to the Foreign Minister of the Japanese Emperor." Mr. Heuksen, the interpreter, was to go with Lord Elgin to Yedo, to secure for





TOWNSEND HARRIS







the English the counterpart of what had been won for the United States.

When Lord Elgin showed his resolve to pass on from Simoda to Yedo, the Japanese officials used their best efforts to dissuade him. The Governor paid him an official visit, and he and his party already showed how kindly the Japanese would take to European ways.

"He brought a large suite on board with him," writes Oliphant, "all of whom seemed to appreciate an English luncheon. I was rather startled to hear one of them refuse Curaçoa, and ask for Maraschino instead. The Governor himself was a man of a most jovial temperament. He indulged in constant chuckles, and rather reminded one of Mr. Weller senior. He seemed to consider everything a capital joke—even Lord Elgin's positive refusal to comply with his request to hand over the yacht at Simoda and remain at that place. He used every possible argument to carry his point, but without avail. He said he dreaded the consequences to himself, and chuckled; still more did he dread the consequences to us, and chuckled again; and when at last he found that we were neither to be frightened nor cajoled, he seemed perfectly contented, and proceeded to wrap up in square pieces of paper any articles of food which particularly struck his fancy, which he carried in the folds of his shirt, saying, as he did so, that he had a number of children at home of an age to appreciate the culinary curiosities of foreign parts. Many of his suite seemed to have families also, for they followed his example. I



rather think one attempted to carry away some strawberry jam in his bosom, or in the sleeve of his coat, which was made full and baggy for the purpose."

By this time Lord Elgin had resolved to pay no heed to Japanese protests, and to proceed to Yedo without stopping at any intermediate place. It was the custom for even native craft to halt at Uruga, the port visited by Commodore Perry in 1853, there to give an account of themselves to the authorities before going further. As the strangers approached this place, two boat-loads, containing two-sworded officials, pushed out to meet them, making frantic signals to stop ; but not the slightest heed was paid to their commands. One boat got into the wash of the *Furious* and tossed so that an officer, who had stood up the better to see, turned an involuntary somersault ; his companion, however, supported by two boatmen, continued standing and waving his arms like a semaphore as long as he could be seen from the *Furious*.\*

At Kanagawa lay a Russian squadron under Lord Elgin's friend and rival, Count Poutiatine, who was also pressing Japan for a treaty. Beyond this point no one supposed that the British ships

\* It illustrates Japanese tenacity that some of these Government boats rowed after the squadron for thirty miles, and in the end boarded the British ships at Yedo. One of the pursuers came on board with a laugh at the original proceedings of the British, who in their haste had, he said, made a mistake ; of course they would retire down the bay in the morning.



would venture. They were without charts for the upper part of the Bay of Yedo, to which Commodore Perry had not gone. But Captain Sherard Osborn was a skilful mariner. Leading the way in the *Furious*, and followed closely by the other ships, he advanced into waters visited as yet by no foreign man-of-war. Extensive mud-banks were said to bar the way, but at the worst soft mud was not as bad as hard rock to ground upon, and so the ships advanced. The shore was obscured by mist, which made progress the more difficult. "Up out of the sea, and out of the mist, rose one startling novelty after another. Huge batteries, big enough to delight the Czar Nicolas, temples, the Imperial Palace, Yedo itself curving round the bay—all for the first time looked upon from the decks of a foreign man-of-war!" As the squadron neared the city, the intruders suffered momentary disappointment at seeing four ships of European model lying at anchor; but they proved to be Japanese ships, two of them bought from the Dutch, two built by the Japanese themselves, and objects of great pride and complacency on that account. One was painted throughout a brilliant red, the other a sombre black, and Captain Osborn formed no high opinion of the seaworthy qualities of the home-made vessels. Since that time Japan has learned her lesson better!

On August 12, 1858, at two p.m., Lord Elgin's squadron anchored three miles from shore,



and only five miles from Yedo itself. Though with no very striking beauty as viewed from the water, the scene was full of interest. The front of the city was defended by a double row of detached fortresses, and the enormous number of guns in evidence convinced the visitors that Japan must be spending huge sums on war material. The British ships took care to anchor where their guns commanded both the shore batteries and the small Japanese fleet—an intimation that the hour had come for Japan to treat with other nations or to take the consequences. For some time, owing to a strong gale, few small boats approached, but on the following morning the water was alive with them, full of curious inquirers about the new arrivals.

Of course the officials said the British could not stay at Yedo. The water was shallow, the anchorage insecure, and, lying so far from shore, the ships could not possibly take in provisions; while at Kanagawa every convenience was available. To all of which Lord Elgin paid little heed. On August 14 arrived the battered little gunboat *Lee*, having escaped destruction by a miracle. On her bow was painted, in figures two feet long, her number in the fleet of gunboats, "82," and the Japanese asked with some concern whether this had anything to do with the number of ships the British and French were bringing into Japanese waters. Knowing his strength, Lord Elgin assumed a strong tone. He sent a



message to the Japanese authorities, intimating that he had come to make a treaty and to hand over a yacht as a present to the Emperor, and requesting that for the negotiations he be furnished with a residence on shore. Meanwhile there was little that the Japanese had not found out about their visitors. Officials boarding the ships took copious notes of every word of conversation, and even made sketches of some of the British officers. But since to maintain seclusion is in the East a sign of rank, to these prying officials Lord Elgin continued invisible, and he let it be understood that he would deal only with persons of rank as high as his own. A message which he sent to the Government was signed "Elgin and Kincardine." This was a fine morsel for the inquisitive as to the invisible representative of Great Britain. As even the Shogun himself was closely watched, the Japanese could imagine no one free from espionage, and came to the conclusion that there were two envoys, Kincardine being sent to watch Elgin.

Whatever difficulties inferior officials might raise, having made the American treaty, Japan fully expected to conclude similar treaties with other powers. The Government received Lord Elgin's overtures with every courtesy, and offered him the choice of two dwellings on shore. Suspicious of the slights that orientals delight to inflict on intruders, he caused inquiries to be made, and found that one of these residences was a poor



building in a disreputable suburb. It was at length agreed that he should take up his residence in a Buddhist temple, which proved, unlike the temples in China, to be in an excellent condition of order and repair.

Lord Elgin's landing took place on August 17. As informal and unimposing as possible the Japanese had desired to make the reception, but the British were determined upon an impressive ceremony. The boats of the squadron were manned and armed, and the ships dressed with flags. When the time came, instead of entering Japanese boats, Lord Elgin took the Japanese officers on board the *Lee*, which made her way carefully to a point near the shore. In double column was then formed a procession of ships' boats, gay with pennants and ensigns, and crowded with officers and men in holiday attire. The band played, and the ships' guns boomed a salute as was escorted to the landing-place the Ambassador of Great Britain, the first to go to Yedo since James I. made a treaty with Japan in 1613. In Yedo the preparations had caused to gather a vast crowd, which surveyed with curious interest the picturesque procession as it went through the streets. Big-jointed Englishmen, wearing cocked hats, gilded coats, and long swords, were carried in wickerwork palanquins, with their knees doubled up to their chins and suffering untold discomfort. Policemen in a kind of harlequin costume guarded the procession on either



side. Their dress was like a patchwork counterpane, their weapons were iron rods six or seven feet long.

“As for the crowd,” says Oliphant, “it was wild with excitement; the inhabitants of every cross-street and lane poured out to see us pass. The excitement of maidservants in our own country, where the strains of martial music fall upon their ears, was nothing to it. There were mothers with small babies hanging over their shoulders, reckless of their progeny, hastening to swell the crowd; children dodging under old people’s legs, and old people tottering after children, and bathers of both sexes, regardless of the fact that they had nothing on but soap, or the Japanese substitute for it, crowding the doorways. The clatter of pattens was quite remarkable; as all the women wear high wooden pattens, which are very inconvenient to run in, and as women in Japan, as in England, formed the largest proportion of the mob, the scuffling they made added to the tumult. Not that the people were the least disorderly; they laughed, and stared, and ran parallel with us, till stopped by a barrier, for the Japanese are perfect in the management of crowds. In the principal street there are wooden gates about every two hundred yards, with a gatekeeper seated in a little house like a turnpike. The moment we pass this the gate is shut, and the old crowd is left behind to crane over the bars, and watch with envious eyes the new crowd forming. All the cross-streets entering the main street are shut off from it by ropes stretched across them, under or over which the people never attempt to



pass. The crowd was, to all appearance, entirely composed of the shopkeepers and lower classes. . . . For at least two miles did we pass between two rows of human beings six or eight deep, until at last, turning down a short lane, and passing between a pair of heavy wooden gates, which closed behind us, we entered a courtyard formed by a temple and its adjacent buildings, at one corner of which a number of servants were standing on the steps of a verandah waiting to receive us."

Lord Elgin's quarters looked out upon this courtyard, in the centre of which was a tiny pond. A few months earlier, Mr. Townsend Harris, visiting Yedo, had found the rooms prepared for him furnished in the European style. With their quick imitative faculty, the Japanese had copied Mr. Harris's furniture as seen at Simoda, and now in Lord Elgin's quarters were tables and chairs, beds and mattresses, things unknown in Japan native life. True to the national instinct, the Japanese surrounded their guests with spies. The ante-rooms were thronged with these men, in the guise of guards, and not an article was allowed to enter without minute examination. Oliphant complains that they would even poke their heads above the stairs to watch the Britons preparing for bed; when ordered to depart they would declare that they had come to clean something, and go off with smiles and bows, only to do the same thing again when occasion offered. A titter



behind the thin paper wall which separated their chambers from neighbouring dwellings sometimes reminded the visitors that even the gentler sex was interested in their doings. They suspected that the priests in the temple made a considerable income by selling peeps at them through favourably situated holes in the walls. A priest himself took careful notes of the Englishmen's method of using soap and towel when they bathed in the little pond within the temple precincts.

Since Lord Elgin had only a few days in Japan, he embarked upon his business as rapidly as possible. Mr. Harris had found the Japanese extremely dilatory, but this was not Lord Elgin's experience. The Government quickly appointed six commissioners, with adequate powers, and almost at once daily meetings began between the two sides. At first the commissioners had numerous followers, in reality spies, present at these meetings, but to this Lord Elgin objected, saying that six Japanese were surely more than equal to himself in capacity ; henceforth throughout their deliberations the commissioners had with them only a secretary and an interpreter. They met at Lord Elgin's quarters, and showed such an appreciation of British fare that they invariably arrived in time for luncheon, and one of them said that the treaty would taste of ham and champagne. Only a few months before Mr. Harris complained that the Japanese of high rank would not meet him at table ; apparently a great



change had already been effected, but in some respects Mr. Harris received higher honour than did Lord Elgin, for he had a personal interview with the Shogun. From day to day the commissioners brought word to Lord Elgin, that, though the Shogun was ill, he hoped to see the British Plenipotentiary before his departure. The truth is that, notwithstanding the many kind messages purporting to come from him, he was in reality dead; his decease appears to have taken place about the time of Lord Elgin's arrival. The Japanese practice was to conceal the death of the ruler for some weeks, until his successor was safely installed in office, and it speaks well for the efficiency of their system that not a whisper of the Shogun's death seems to have got abroad in Japan while the British were there.

Probably the ruler's death had little effect upon the Japanese attitude. The Government was an oligarchy rather than a despotism, the Shogun, like the Mikado, a mere figurehead, obedient to the circle surrounding him. Of the negotiations themselves little need be said. Though the Japanese still followed the old habit of creating obstructions, few of these were serious. "My poor dear friends the Japanese," says Lord Elgin, "object to everything and always give way." At first he had sometimes to assume the demeanour of the "intractable barbarian," but the commissioners were on the whole reasonable, and readily accepted the inevitable. They knew that



they must now go as far as they had gone in the American treaty, and the real points for negotiation were such slight ones as the treaty ports to be designated and the dates when they were to be opened. The Japanese showed insight, ability and businesslike promptness that aroused Lord Elgin's admiration; so quickly was the treaty outlined, that in about a week it was ready for signature. To the British, Mr. Heuksen, the Dutch interpreter, proved a most valuable assistant, while the interpreter on the Japanese side, Moriyama, was also clever and understood his business. Though Dutch was the language of intercourse, so conciliatory were the Japanese that they were even ready to accept English as the official language in which the relations between the two countries should be carried on.

In brief, the treaty provided that the Japanese should receive at Yedo a British diplomatic agent, and consuls at some half-dozen other ports; these ports were to be open to British subjects as residences; official British representatives might travel freely in Japan; trade was to be free from Japanese official intervention; the rate of duty on exports and imports was henceforth to be 5 per cent., but that on intoxicating liquors, to which, as the British had observed, the Japanese took very kindly, was to be 35 per cent. The importation of opium was prohibited. Every five years the tariff was to be revised. A further provision gave to the British the privilege of extraterritoriality, a



concession won by Mr. Harris for the Americans ; the privilege meant that foreigners in Japan were not to be summoned before Japanese tribunals. To Japan, this was the galling feature of the treaty. It involved the admission which no occidental state would concede, that for administering justice to foreigners her own courts were not to be trusted. Not until 1899 did Japan succeed in getting rid of this humiliating concession.

During the pauses in treaty making, the visitors saw as much of the city and surrounding country as they could. In the business streets their presence attracted attention, and once, but once only, the rabble began to stone them. To the unlettered Japanese all foreigners were Chinamen. Groups of retainers of the nobles would collect and show signs of contempt for the supposed Chinese traders, and sometimes the populace cried after the British, "Chinamen, Chinamen, have you anything to sell?" Yedo they found to be an immense city, without the walls always found surrounding Chinese cities. Through its heart flowed a river spanned by three fine bridges. Care had been taken to preserve numerous open spaces, and the visitors wondered most of all at the vast stretch of park land surrounding the Shogun's castle. The feudal lords of Japan, like the nobility of England, had residences at the capital where, practically as hostages to the Shogun, their wives and children resided permanently. The Prince of Satsuma is



said to have had nine mansions in Yedo. Spacious areas surrounded the larger dwellings, some of which it was said could house as many as ten thousand persons. Walls, of which the lower parts were of massive stone, guarded them from intrusion, and were imposing; but the dwellings themselves had no architectural pretensions, and, owing to the danger from earthquakes, they were chiefly of wood. From the outside alone were they surveyed; to the interior of none did the Europeans gain admission, for Japanese society looked askance at these vulgar intruders. In the aristocratic quarter of the city the streets seemed almost deserted, except when some great man, with perhaps a thousand followers in his train, filled a whole street with a procession very like that which followed a great English noble in the Middle Ages.

“The natives,” says Oliphant, “on meeting a procession of this kind were expected either to move away from the road altogether or humbly to prostrate themselves while it passed. Under no circumstance was any one allowed to cross it. This was an insult which it was considered should be wiped out by the death of the rash man who should offer it.”

Probably, in 1858, Lord Elgin thought Japan a great deal better than she really was, for to him the country seemed already to have reached something near perfection; in like manner, the



Spaniards who went to Mexico were dazzled by a "civilization" that had not outgrown degrading cannibalism. In many ways Japan was still barbaric. There was a lingering brutality in the people that contradicts Lord Elgin's impression of their universal gentleness. Commodore Perry tells of a Japanese entertainment to which high dignitaries of the empire invited him, in order to show the West what the East could do. Wrestlers, great masses of flesh and muscle, were summoned to the arena. One, with lowered head, stood still, the other, bellowing like a bull, rushed at him; they clashed their heads together, and kept up this display of savage force until smeared with blood and terribly bruised. There was a fine irony in the American exhibition of the telegraph and the railway train as their contribution to this entertainment. But it shows how quickly the Japanese learned, that they would not repeat the wrestlers' bout for Lord Elgin's edification. They had noted adverse comments upon it in the narrative of Commodore Perry's expedition, and could not bear to do anything tainted with the brand of inferior civilization.

The Japan of 1858 was only Europe somewhat belated; the Spanish bullfight, still a survival in Europe, is as brutal as the Japanese wrestling. Neatness, order, the competence of her officials, the high organization of her government, were as conspicuous in Japan in 1858 as they are now. Everything was regulated and supervised. "If



my servant runs after a butterfly," said Oliphant, "a two-sworded official runs after him." Japan's defect was that she had not yet adopted the new mechanism of civilization which was so vastly increasing the power of Europe. That the Japanese would prove apt pupils of Europe was obvious from the first. In 1854 Commodore Perry made them a present of a brass howitzer; when Mr. Harris went to Japan two years later, he was told that a thousand others had been made from this pattern. Yet the old aloofness broke down only slowly. Though the Japanese had known of the telegraph for some years, Lord Elgin's arrival at Nagasaki was communicated to Yedo by echoing cannon at intervals along the coast. The railway, too, was well known to them; even high officials insisted on a voyage in the toy carriage brought by Commodore Perry in 1854.

"It was," says Mr. Hawks, the chronicler of the expedition, "a spectacle not a little ludicrous to behold a dignified mandarin (*sic*) whirling around the circular road at the rate of twenty miles an hour, with his loose robes flying in the wind. As he clung with a desperate hold to the edge of the roof, grinning with intense interest, and his huddled-up body shook convulsively with a kind of laughing timidity, while the car spun rapidly around the circle, you might have supposed that the movement, somehow or other, was dependent rather upon the enormous exertions of the uneasy mandarin than upon the power of the



little puffing locomotive which was so easily performing its work."

Yet for years still no use was made in Japan of this great invention.

But reluctant as they were to accept inevitable change, it may be doubted whether, even in 1858, the Japanese should properly be ranked as an oriental people; they belong as much to the borderland of the West as to that of the East. In days when communication with distant regions was infrequent and slight, when there was no steam power to bring the nations to each other's doors, Japan was naturally more influenced by her near oriental neighbours than by distant peoples; but the activity of mind and energy of character, both of her ruling classes and of her people, were unlike anything to be found in either of the two great eastern regions, China or India. Though the Japanese married women who pulled out their eyebrows and blackened their teeth were on an inferior level, their *status* was yet higher than that of women in any oriental country. Polygamy was not permitted. Japanese trade, too, with its straightforward rigidity of price, presented something quite unlike the usual haggling of oriental market-places.

The Japanese showed a simplicity of taste and an absence of luxury so far from our notions of oriental ostentation that it was severely Puritan in character. Their sobriety of dress led Captain Osborn to call them the Quakers of Asia.



Mr. Townsend Harris remarked when he visited the Shogun that the robes of the ruler probably cost less than what he himself wore ; there were no rich jewels and no pomp. "I did not see any gilding in any part, and all the wooden columns were unpainted. Not an article of any kind appeared in any of the rooms, except the braziers and the chairs and tables brought for my use." The singular practice, which still survives in Japan, of enclosing in correspondence a piece of dried salt fish is the symbol of this simplicity. It says in effect, "Remember we were originally a nation of fishermen ; let us not now become effeminate and luxurious, but recognize in the enclosed slice of fish the emblem of our former occupation, and let it recall to us the necessity of abstinence and frugality." Not only the poor but the nobles practised a rigid economy, and through this long training, perhaps, no other people in the world can bear such extremes of heat and cold, such hunger and thirst, such hardship and fatigue, as can the Japanese.

The landscape gardening in Japan, the multitude of flowers, the trim hedges like those of England, but relieved from stiffness by the Japanese convolvulus with its varied colours, delighted Lord Elgin. Accustomed as he was to the noble parks of England, he yet thought them equalled in Japan. The roads were beautifully clean, and the villages that he saw in his rides into the country were models of neatness—



an attractive setting for the happy and healthy faces of those who dwelt in them. In the cities it is not easy to preserve these characteristics amid a crowded population, yet Yedo was pleasing. In the aristocratic quarter, streets from twenty to thirty yards wide, with huge drains almost like moats at each side, were strikingly unlike the narrow, filthy, undrained thoroughfares of a Chinese town. Municipal government seemed elaborately efficient. Gates at short intervals in the chief thoroughfares prevented the massing of great crowds. Every street had its special magistrate, who knew all about every one in it; he kept a record of births, marriages, and deaths, and of everything else that happened, and his inspectors were constantly spying out new information. In addition to this oversight, the inhabitants were held responsible for each other. Each group of four or five male householders formed a unit, with one of their number at its head, and the chief was responsible for the conduct of the members of his group. It was the tithing system of mediæval England more efficiently organized and administered. And this efficiency had long endured. Will Adams, an Englishman resident in Japan, wrote, in 1611, "I think no land better governed in the world by civil policy."

Education seemed to receive close attention. At the end of the seventeenth century Kaempfer wrote that "the whole empire might be called a school of civility and good manners." The visitors



were told that all the children in Japan, of both sexes, were taught to read and write, and that they also knew something about the history of their country. Certainly all classes showed a keen desire for knowledge. At Nagasaki, during Lord Elgin's visit, some men of high rank were labouring as artisans in the workshops, under the Dutch engineers engaged in directing improvements in the harbour. Schools of medicine and surgery were also doing what they could with the slight access to the ideas of the outside world which was permitted them. The visitors contrasted this with the attitude of China.

"A Chinaman," says Oliphant, "thinks that any study but that of the Confucian books is degrading, and treats every modern invention with an air of calm contempt. Probably he contends that the art has long been known in China, so that if you were to show him a railway, he would most likely say, 'Hab got alo same that Pekin side, only two tim more chop, chop can go' (we have got the same at Pekin, only it goes twice as quickly). A Japanese, on the other hand, is full of zeal and curiosity. He examines and asks questions about everything within his reach, carefully noting the answers."

When terms were finally settled, it was agreed that on the 26th, exactly two months after the signing of the Treaty of Tientsin, the new treaty should be signed; then also the yacht was to be handed over, and the Japanese batteries were to



honour the British flag in a way unheard of in Japan—with a salute of twenty-one guns. On the evening of the 25th, Lord Elgin entertained at dinner the Imperial Commissioners. Before dinner the guests were amused by a Japanese juggler, who gave an amazing exhibition of skill, for it was not a mere trick. When he had twisted two bits of paper about six inches square into the shape of small butterflies he “threw the paper butterfly up in the air, and gradually it seemed to acquire life from the action of his fan—now wheeling and dipping towards it, now tripping along its edge, then hovering over it, as we may see a butterfly do over a flower on a fine summer’s day, then in wantonness wheeling away and again returning to alight, the wings quivering with nervous restlessness! One could have sworn it was a live creature! Now it flew off to the light and then the conjurer recalled it, and presently supplied a mate in the shape of another butterfly, and together they rose, and played about the old man’s fan. . . . A plant with some flowers stood . . . near at hand; by gentle movements of the fan the little creatures were led up to it, and then their delight! how they played about the leaves, sipped the flowers, kissed each other, and whisked off again with all the airs and graces of real butterflies.” After dinner, when the toast came, the Japanese were puzzled at the noisy honours of the British. Finally they grasped the principle of this demonstration, “When you in the West wish



to honour a person especially, you roar and shout after your meals." At such festivals Lord Elgin was a master of tact, but it was probably too much for his gravity when, in illustration of this newly acquired knowledge, one of the Japanese commissioners, a grave old man, "during a dead pause in the conversation, suddenly started to his feet and emitted a stentorian cheer, after which he sat solemnly down." Perhaps the incident was characteristic of Japanese facility in imitating European ways.

The next day, with much ceremony Lord Elgin embarked to meet the Japanese Commissioners on board the yacht. When he had formally addressed them and made the presentation of the beautiful ship, the British ensign was hauled down and the Japanese flag, a red ball on a white ground, was hoisted. This transfer was the signal for the salute from the forts to the British ships. With perfect precision, and for the first time in their lives, Japanese gunners performed this ceremony; the British warships responded and the *Emperor* moved off with her Japanese crew, who in a short week had learned the mysteries of her complicated mechanism. Amidst a great crowd ashore and afloat, for the day was a holiday in Yedo, the visitors steamed slowly down the Bay of Yedo. "As I was pacing the deck of the *Furious*," writes Lord Elgin, "before retiring to rest after my labours were over, to my great surprise I observed that the forts were



illuminated! Imagine our daring exploit of breaking through every *consigne*, and coming up to Yeddo, having ended in an illumination of the forts in our honour! At 4 a.m. this morning we weighed anchor, and are now some one hundred and forty miles on our way to Shanghae." No single disagreeable association clouded the memory of the visit to the island Empire. But the sea proved less kind; on the return voyage the squadron was caught in the tail of a typhoon which so delayed progress that the voyage to Shanghai occupied a week.

It was in reality a stormy Japan that Lord Elgin left behind, and the Japanese soon belied his faith in their happiness and unity. The treaty had been made by the Shogun, not by the supreme power, the Mikado; its terms violated fundamental and unrepealed laws of the Empire against foreign intercourse; and this aroused fierce resentment in the Conservative classes. When, in conformity with the concessions by Japan, foreign powers began to establish legations in or near Yedo, unparalleled atrocities were committed against the intruders. The Samurai or military caste, a class of persons, like mediæval military retainers, quick to use the sword in any case, were now glad of an excuse to attack the waning power of the Shogun. No foreigner's life was safe, and some of those who had been with Lord Elgin were victims. Oliphant, returning to Japan a little later, was nearly cut to pieces



during a ruffianly night attack on the British Legation ; and he carried to the grave the scars of the wounds then received. In 1861, Mr. Heuksen, Lord Elgin's efficient interpreter, was murdered in a suburb of Yedo. Only in 1865 did the great skill of Sir Harry Parkes secure the Mikado's ratification of Lord Elgin's treaty, in face of bitter hostility that still resorted to murderous attacks on foreigners. It must indeed be admitted that the resentment of the old school against the foreigner who had forced himself upon Japan was entirely natural. The end of the internal convulsions begun by the treaties, was that the Shogunate itself disappeared in 1868 ; since that time the Mikado has been the one supreme ruler in Japan. During these changes the Daimios showed a rare patriotism. Seeing that only a centralized state could cope with European aggression, they voluntarily gave up titles, privileges, and authority, to make the Mikado's government strong ; the result is that the solidarity of Japan is as conspicuous now as her disunion was in 1858.

Lord Elgin arrived at Shanghai on September 2, 1858, having been absent just a month ; there he was to meet the Chinese Commissioners to complete the Treaty of Tientsin. But with characteristic neglect of time the Commissioners were long in coming. Lord Elgin, hoping to return home at once, had still before him many weary months in China.



## CHAPTER V

### THE YANG-TSE VALLEY, 1858

ON returning to China, Lord Elgin found himself once more involved in perplexities. From Canton the news was not reassuring; the Chinese "Braves" were still harassing the British. They acted, it appeared, with the connivance of Hwang, the Governor-General of the province, and were directed by a committee of local magnates appointed from Peking. Already the labours at Tientsin seemed to have been in vain; it was obvious that China hardly felt herself bound by the treaty, and, no longer master as he was at Tientsin, Lord Elgin was forced to await the pleasure of the Chinese court as to the time of concluding the negotiations. But an idle month at Shanghai proved pleasant. There was an agreeable society; and the British Consulate, where Lord Elgin resided, was the scene of much festivity. The tone of the commercial community did not please him. While living in China in great luxury, most of its members expected to make in five years a sufficient fortune to retire upon; since they could



prosper under the existing relations with China, they were suspicious of any changes that threatened profits already secure. Lord Elgin learned, as he says, not to care when the merchants abused him and not to be too much elated by their praise.

When on October 3, Imperial Commissioners at last arrived, Lord Elgin refused to meet them until they had given some assurances as to the breach of faith at Canton, and he let them understand that if the Emperor did not keep treaty engagements a British force would go again to Tientsin and probably to Peking itself. As usual, a resolute attitude proved effective. The Commissioners promised to urge upon the Imperial Government the removal of Hwang; to dissolve the committee of "Braves;" and to issue proclamations condemning any hostile manifestations against the British. When these pledges had been given Lord Elgin consented to treat. Kweiliang and Hwashana, his old diplomatic adversaries at Tientsin, were on the Chinese commission of five; by October 16 the relations were sufficiently amicable for the Commissioners with a ragged *cortège* of spearmen and bannermen to pay a formal visit to Lord Elgin, and from that time rapid progress was made.

Minor trading provisions of the treaty we may pass over, but it was at this time that the opium trade was first legalized in China. The problem regarding opium is most difficult. It is certain now that opium has been used extensively in



China for hundreds of years; long before the British began to trade with them, the Chinese were great consumers of the drug. That its devastations were great Lord Elgin was already aware, and, in the journey to the far interior which he soon took, personal observation confirmed all that had been told him. At Nankin, from one- to two-thirds of the population were said to use it. On November 20, 1858, Lord Elgin writes of a country district in the Yang-tse valley: "We went into some of the cottages of the small farmers. In one we found some men smoking opium. They said they smoked about 80 cash (fourpence) worth a day; that their wages were . . . 120 cash (sixpence) . . . I asked how they could provide for their wives and families if they spent so much on opium." It was a common thing to find in the cottages a room screened off, and men lying there smoking opium; moral and physical ruin was often the result, and the desolating practice seemed to extend over the whole of China.

The chief supply of the ruinous drug came from British territory; though opium was and is grown in increasing quantities in China itself, the quality of that from India was much preferred by connoisseurs. This supply the Chinese Government had tried to cut off; by law the opium trade was wholly forbidden in China, and opium entered the country only in defiance of law. Yet because the Chinese system of government is mere



organized venality, enormous quantities of opium were brought in through the connivance of corrupt officials. At Great Britain's part in this trade moral reformers were much shocked. One method of checking the evil would have been to prohibit the growth of opium in India. But this would not stop it wholly, for other countries could produce the drug, and, besides, no Government would prohibit the production of a commodity which, after all, has its proper use and is a legitimate article of commerce. Since supply and demand were alike continuous, the real problem in China was whether complete prohibition of the trade or its recognition and restriction would be most likely to check the evils of the opium habit. To prohibit the trade was in fact impossible, probably under any Government, but certainly under one as inefficient as that of China. In face of the most stringent deterrents of the law the Chinese officials had always allowed opium to enter the country ; to continue the system of prohibition would not discourage the use of opium and it meant fortunes for illicit traders, and a huge traffic in China over which the Government had no control. The problem was sufficiently complex ; it is the twin of the sister question, licence or no licence for the liquor traffic. In the end Lord Elgin was convinced that it would be best for China to make the traffic legal and to control it by duties, not high enough unduly to encourage smuggling, but so heavy as to tax opium severely. Mr. Reed,



the American plenipotentiary, had gone to China strongly of the opinion that the trade should not be legalized, but further study of the problem led him to concur heartily in Lord Elgin's policy.

The result of much deliberation was that the old complete prohibition was annulled and provisions were made by which opium was permitted to enter at the treaty ports ; but there it was to be handed over to the Chinese, and foreigners were not allowed to carry it to the interior. Further, while on other commodities an *ad valorem* duty of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. was charged and no further transit duties were to be levied in the interior, on opium a duty of 30 cash a chest was to be paid at the ports, and in the interior the Chinese Government might subject it to any further duties which they deemed wise. Probably no better solution of the question could have been found. No treaty provision could stop the growth or use of opium ; but treaty provisions could regulate the trade, and the agreement left the Chinese Government free to put upon its people what pressure it could command.

There was huge clamour in England about the iniquity of forcing the opium traffic upon China, and it is one of the ironies of fate that Lord Elgin, whose chief error in the East was the noble one of condemning too unreservedly the faults of his countrymen, should have been identified with a policy branded as iniquitous. Dealing with a Government incompetent to discharge the



real functions of government, he naturally favoured measures different from those which he agreed to in Japan, where he readily assented to the total prohibition of the opium trade. Though he saw the ills which China suffered from it, he saw too that they were probably less proportionately than the ills of the liquor traffic in his own country. Opium soothes and lulls ; it does not, like gin and rum, madden its votaries ; of Canton, one of the most lawless places in China, Lord Elgin could write in a time of great upheaval : " What a thing it is to have to deal with a sober population ! I have wandered about the streets for some seven or eight days since the capture and I have not seen one drunken man. In any Christian town we should have had numbers of rows by this time arising out of drunkenness, however cowed the population might have been."

He had resolved that when his work at Shanghai was completed, he would take a British squadron up the magnificent Yang-tse-kiang to the far interior of the country, partly in assertion of the rights of British subjects to travel everywhere in China, which the new treaty guaranteed ; partly to see for himself the condition of a region devastated by rebellion, and to estimate the prospects for trade. When he told the Commissioners of his intention they gave an elaborately cordial assent, and promised that the officials should show the British Ambassador every courtesy. On November 8 he was able to



begin this interesting voyage of discovery. Incidentally, as the event showed, the journey vindicated Lord Elgin's diplomacy. It had been said that he would have struck the Peking Government more effectively, if, instead of going to Tientsin by the Peiho, he had blockaded a great channel of commerce like the Yang-tse-kiang. Yet he found the rebels blockading a stretch of one hundred and fifty miles on the great river, and, by this remote menace, the Peking Government was little moved; immediate pressure that could be seen and felt at Peking was indeed the only argument to prevail with the Emperor and his advisers.

The Yang-tse, a noble river, navigable for a great distance, had always been closed to outside commerce, except on its lower reaches, and Lord Elgin's was the first foreign squadron ever seen on its upper waters; it was his journey indeed that helped chiefly to fix the political tradition now established that the Yang-tse valley is the British sphere of influence in China. He took with him five warships, the *Retribution*, the *Furious*, the *Cruiser*, the *Dove*, and the *Lee*; only through this array of force was he able to overawe the deep-rooted dislike of foreigners which, even when the word had been passed from Peking to be civil, animated the local authorities.\* There were no good charts. There was no real pilot:

\* At a much later time, when the opening to steam navigation of the upper reaches of the Yang-tse, far beyond the point reached



Lord Elgin had secured a so-called pilot, but he proved a talkative personage, fuller of curiosity than of information. "The pilot is the most vivacious Chinaman I have seen," wrote Lord Elgin, "inquiring about everything, proposing to go to England, like a Japanese. It was from the naval commander at Kiewhein that we got him. Lay was present when the commodore sent for him. He fell on his knees. The chief informed him that he must go up the river with us and pilot us. 'That is a public service,' says the man, 'and if your Excellency desires it, I must go; but I would humbly submit that I have a mother and sister who must be provided for in my absence.' 'Certainly,' said the chief. 'Then,' answered our man, 'I am ready;' and without further ado he got into the boat with Lay and came off to us." But he proved wholly incompetent; sometimes impudent. He was withal unduly nervous lest he should lose his head when, as constantly happened, his ship went aground.

He "frequents much the stoke-hole," says Oliphant, "upon cold mornings, and appears on deck in a pair of long woollen stockings, which have been served out to him from the ship's stores. Cigars are his especial weakness, and, in order to enjoy them, he perches himself in the chains

by Lord Elgin, was urged, China officially objected on the ground that the monkeys in the gorges would throw rocks on the passing steamers, and that the Government would be held liable for damages. Little, "Through the Yang-tse Gorges," p. 5.



like a monkey, and smokes in a sybaritic manner, expressive of keen enjoyment. Altogether, he considers that he has performed his functions as a pilot if, after we have got aground, he emerges from some place of concealment, and tells Captain Osborn that at this place the water is not deep, the proper channel being quite in another direction, which he does not venture to specify, but disappears again to finish his cigar."

Even a good pilot would have found no easy task, for in places the soft bed of the Yang-tse-kiang is as variable as that of the Mississippi, and the ships found cabbage fields where a channel was marked on the chart. Amidst such difficulties fifty miles made a good day's run, and it took four weeks to ascend six hundred miles to Hankow, where Lord Elgin turned back. It seemed, indeed, a marvel that large warships could ascend so far. But even at Hankow the Yang-tse-kiang is three-quarters of a mile wide, and the ships anchored there in thirteen fathoms. The *Furious*, the largest of the ships to go so far, was helped in ticklish places by her paddle-wheels. Though drawing fifteen feet, she charged, in grand style, bars with only fourteen feet of water. Well handled by her skilful commander, Captain Sherard Osborn, she always managed to pull through, though often stuck for hours. The voyage up the Yang-tse-kiang had for her passengers some of the excitement of a cross-country run.



Beyond the incidents of navigation, nothing much happened until the five warships reached Nankin, a city nearly two hundred miles from Shanghai. There Lord Elgin came first into touch with the rebellion, by which great parts of the valley of the Yang-tse-kiang were devastated. Though Nankin was in possession of the rebels, and they commanded the river, on the landward side the city was languidly besieged by the Imperialists, who, in their manner of fighting, showed an immense respect for their own safety. Lord Elgin wished to take no part for or against the rebels. But he was travelling up the Yang-tse-kiang under treaty rights, conceded by the lawful ruler of the country, and he was resolved to allow no interference with his voyage. As he approached Nankin, it was doubtful what the rebels would do. Batteries looking toward the river were gay with bunting, and the *Lee*, a gunboat, was sent forward to test the attitude of the garrison. She passed the forts, and seemed quite clear of them, when there was a puff of smoke, and a shot whizzed over her. At once she flew a white flag, but when no heed was paid to this, she opened fire on the batteries; the other ships steamed up, and as they passed, let fly, doing much damage, but receiving some in return. On the *Retribution* one man was killed, and two were severely wounded, while on the *Furious* Lord Elgin himself was nearly struck by a passing shot.



The ships anchored above the town for the night, and in council all agreed that, as a warning to the rebel forces farther up the river, the insult must be punished. So, early on the next morning, the five ships dropped down opposite Nankin, and for an hour and a half poured into it a shower of shot and shell, that was hardly answered, and that, as the event proved, had a most wholesome effect: it made the rebels extremely civil as the ships passed down the river. On the return voyage, indeed, the rebel commander apologized profusely for the incident, and said the firing on the *Lee* was due to the ignorance of some subordinates, subsequently beheaded for their offence. Three officers and twenty men were said to have been killed by the British fire. Though he regretted the necessity, Lord Elgin approved of these stern measures. It was obvious that force and resolution, promptly shown, in the end solved and saved difficulties.

Since, for one hundred and fifty miles above Nankin, the rebels were in possession of the river, upon which all commerce had been destroyed, Lord Elgin had abundant opportunities to see what the rebellion really involved. During seven or eight years it had raged with varying success almost from the gates of Canton for nearly one thousand miles into the interior. Nothing reveals the paralysis of the Imperial power at Peking more than its utter incapacity to grapple with this awful evil; only, some years later, when the vigorous



services of General Gordon were secured was the difficulty really met. Though the causes of the rebellion are obscure, no doubt the chief were the inefficiency and venality of the governors of the provinces; it is easy to revolt against a government which asserts only its privileges, and neglects its duties. The rebels seemed to have some religious views that led them to attack the temples wherever found, but any explanation of their opinions was utterly incoherent. They claimed sympathy from Lord Elgin, because they too believed in Jesus, and more than once he received on silk rolls rhapsodies of faith unintelligible to a Western mind. But, whatever their theories, little of Christianity marked the rebels' conduct. Their "chief," "the Heavenly King," had three hundred wives; women captives were divided among the soldiery, while the men were killed.

There was among the rebels no patriotism in revolt against Imperial misrule. Plunder was their chief aim, and any vigorous leader could gather about him followers enough to plan and carry on outrage and ruin. Though the rebels captured and destroyed dozens of towns and cities, rarely did they take them by open attack. Into a town a few men would go, apparently to trade, and would reside near one of the gates. On a given day they would raise a disturbance, seize a gate, and hold it until their friends outside the town, who had collected in small bands in the



neighbourhood, joined them. A panic would follow, and the chief authorities of the town would, perhaps, be the first to fly. The Imperial soldiers, ill paid and ill cared for, without discipline or spirit, could be overwhelmed with ease, and then the town and people would be given over to all the horrors of sack and massacre. In order to strike terror into the hearts of any who thought of resistance, the rebels often beheaded even the harmless peasantry. Sometimes the Imperial soldiers joined the rebels. Sometimes, when no rebels were at hand, the lawless and starving element in a town would raise the cry that the rebels were coming, and use the confusion for purposes of pillage and murder. Considerable areas in China had been completely devastated by these means, and anarchy and ruin marked the paralysis of the Imperial administration.

As Lord Elgin went up the river he witnessed numerous engagements between the opposing forces, but so inane were the methods of the war that, carried on in this way, it might well last for ever. Oliphant describes an engagement near Woohoo, a town in the hands of the rebels.

“It is impossible to conceive anything more highly picturesque, or theatrical in its effect, than the scene which now lay spread before us. The hills were crowned with the gay flags of the rebels; the rich autumnal tints upon the trees were as bright in their colours as the dresses of the soldiers grouped beneath them; bodies of



men were marching in gallant array down the park-like slopes, to meet the foe in the plain beneath. The imperialist position was upon the flat ground upon the river margin. Here they had erected straw screens and temporary earth-works, behind which were placed a few small guns, keeping up an apparently harmless fire upon the enemy. Now and then groups of men carrying gingalls would advance from the hostile ranks, and approach to within two or three hundred yards of each other, fire their gingalls, and retire amid a great waving of banners. We could not wait to watch the issue of the battle, which might last for ever, if they continued to fight on the same principle."

But, harmless as this direct fighting may have seemed, the war was in reality ruthless and cruel almost beyond imagining. To people accustomed to stable social order, the state of the country is well-nigh incredible. Cities of four or five hundred thousand inhabitants had been reduced to five hundred. Of Kew-kiang, a city once important, Oliphant says—

"A single dilapidated street, composed only of a few mean shops, was all that existed of this once thriving and populous city; the remainder of the vast area, comprised within walls five or six miles in circumference, contained nothing but ruins, weeds, and kitchen gardens. The inhabitants declare that this is partly owing to the five years' occupation of the town by the rebels, and partly to the destructive propensities of the



imperialist troops, who retook it from them only last April, or seven months ago. Its present garrison consists of four thousand men, while its population scarce amounted to as many hundreds."

And of Han-yang, situated at the highest point on the river to which they penetrated, he says—

"It is surrounded by a massive, well-built wall in good repair, and has evidently been a compact, handsome city of small dimensions, probably not above two miles in circumference. It was apparently an aristocratic, quiet place, chiefly inhabited by officials and their retainers, and containing all the departmental public buildings. The ruins of these were extensive. Fragments of lions and dragons, carved in granite or marble, lay strewn about the well-paved streets. Here and there a handsome carved granite archway still spanned the principal thoroughfares, but they were more often prostrate and overgrown with weeds. Some were undergoing the process of restoration, and many of the authorities were inhabiting temporary abodes."

There was some excuse for the respectful distance at which the opposing sides carried on hostilities, for no quarter was shown to male captives, who were ruthlessly beheaded on each side. The chief actors in the rebellion were men of low class, largely, it should seem, from the Canton province; for their leaders they showed slight respect, and drunkenness, foul language and vice were characteristics of the rebel forces. Such



motley gangs could easily have been put to rout by any settled government less incapable of using its resources than was that of China. The unhappy peasantry were ready to turn to any power that could protect them, and there can be no doubt that Lord Elgin's force was welcomed in the far interior partly because the poor people thought it might afford such security.

Amid these distressing scenes day after day, the ships steamed up the Yang-tse-kiang. Since they ran aground repeatedly and were delayed, there were abundant opportunities to land and to take the long walks in which Lord Elgin delighted. He found no difficulty in talking to the peasantry through the interpreters, Mr. Lay and Mr. Wade, and he eagerly cross-questioned them about the conditions of life; not, however, with any great success. The Chinese, as he naïvely remarks, have been so long "civilized," and have brought politeness to such a point, that, when asked a question, they desire to say what the questioner expects, rather than what lays bare the truth. The impression that he formed of the rural population was on the whole favourable. For the most part the peasantry seemed to be freeholders, each with three or four acres; the normal taxation was not excessive, and, where order was maintained, an industrious man could prosper. Many of the villages were well built and attractive in appearance. He found numerous village schools, but they were of course not free (England herself had



not then free elementary education), and the poorer peasantry could not afford to educate their children. The blots upon the picture were, on the one hand, the rapacity of the mandarins, who were apt to arrest and imprison any one resisting their exactions, and, on the other, the rebel menace. The smoke of burning villages was sometimes to be seen, and straw huts, in the fields bordering the river, told of homeless populations who had erected these transient shelters. The people themselves were always respectful, always friendly; any traces of ill will were directly due to the mandarins' jealousy of foreign influence. Probably in all the world there is no more docile or tractable population than that of China as a whole, and Lord Elgin was convinced that two dozen men, reasonably well armed for defensive purposes, could go without injury from one end of the country to the other.

In places the scenery was very beautiful. The lower stretches of the Yang-tse-kiang pass through a level country not without its own charms. As the ships went farther up, the country became mountainous. Near Tai-ping the river passes through a mighty barrier of precipitous rocks, the ledges of which were turned into batteries, as ineffective probably as Chinese batteries usually are. To reach these, steps had been hewn in the living rock, and the batteries were gay with flags, and thronged by soldiers, who peered down over their cannon at



the strange spectacle of the foreign ships. This narrow gorge, but half a mile wide, could easily be made impregnable to a hostile force on the river; it was occupied by Imperialists, who were uniformly friendly. When the ships reached their remotest point, Hankow, they were near high mountain ranges, and the beautiful autumn foliage reminded Lord Elgin in some places of Canada.

The visitors had good sport along the river. With no fire-arms, the Chinese peasant can do little to molest the game, so that the country is like one vast preserve. The *Dove* caught a huge wild boar in the river, and his head made an excellent dish. Deer were sometimes shot on the banks. The buffalo is domesticated in China, and was often seen peacefully drawing carts. In the ruined streets of Woochang, where Lord Elgin received a pompous official reception, a walking party put up two brace of pheasants, and along the river many of these magnificent birds with gorgeous plumage were killed. Wild geese, ducks and waterfowl of all kinds abounded. One day, a flock of wild fowl literally darkened the sky; Lord Elgin estimated that it was about five miles long. Not only on the river itself, but in the numerous lakes and ponds near it, sport was good, and without any thought of pay, the peasants proved quite ready to perform the office of retriever. "One man," says Oliphant, "abandoned entirely his agricultural operations,



and devoted himself to swimming in after the birds, or plunging vigorously into the tenacious mud, stripping each time to his work." In the midst of this foreign population, two or three Englishmen would go out to shoot snipe with as great a sense of security as on a Scottish moor. The people invited them into their houses to partake of the hot tea which even the peasantry seem to keep perpetually on tap, and thought a few lucifer matches, the pyrotechnic wonders of which they much admired, an abundant but quite unnecessary reward for all their trouble. So docile and timid is this population, that in the streets of Hankow, when thousands of Chinamen were crowding round a handful of Englishmen, these found it necessary to reassure the nervous throng by saying repeatedly, "Don't be afraid, don't be afraid." The strength of might was, after all, with the few visitors; any town which ventured upon outrage, the warships could readily have destroyed.

This city of Hankow, Lord Elgin's objective point, lies on the north bank of the Yang-tse at its junction with the river Han. There are really three cities. On the north side of the Yang-tse-kiang, Hankow and Hanyang are separated by the river Han, and on the south side lies the imposing-looking walled city of Woochang. Great accounts had reached Europe of the magnitude of these cities, hitherto wholly closed to European commerce. Huc, the Jesuit priest,



who passed through them some fifteen years earlier, travelling by land, estimated that in all they contained five million people. But, like most estimates of this kind, the numbers are excessive. It is true that all three cities had recently been devastated and almost completely destroyed by the rebels, but Lord Elgin thought that at no time could they have contained more than two or three million people.

The arrival of the ships at Hankow created a great sensation. When the strangers appeared in the streets, crowds attended them in wonder and curiosity, but with no sign of hostility. Not so friendly were the rulers. Notwithstanding instructions from Peking, the Governor-General showed unwillingness to allow free intercourse, and was especially anxious, in a fatuous kind of way, to prevent trade of any kind. If Lord Elgin wished to buy provisions, the Governor would try to make him accept them as presents, and when Europeans made purchases in Hankow, their money, though at first received, was afterwards returned. Lord Elgin had firmly to insist upon the rights guaranteed by the Peking Government, and upon paying for all that he required. The Chinese expressed a hope that the British would be content with seeing Hankow, and would not enter Woochang, on the south side of the river. This was enough to show Lord Elgin that his failure to go there would be regarded as a check to the foreigners,



and he promptly sent a message to the Governor-General that he should call upon him in state on the following day. When further difficulties were raised, one of the warships shifted her berth so as to lie opposite the chief entrance to Woochang. As usual, the implied menace of force had its effect, and on December 10, Lord Elgin entered Woochang with an imposing guard of honour. The warships thundered a salute that struck momentary terror to the hearts of the Chinese, and for a mile and a half the brilliant *cortège* filed through crowded and handsome streets to the residence of the Governor.

Woochang, indeed, though great parts of it were in ruins, was almost European in its magnificence ; the Governor-General Kwan knew something of European manners, and entertained his guests handsomely. Attended by a motley array of followers, armed variously with guns, spears, and bows and arrows, he returned their visit in state on the next day. The distinguished visitor was especially impressed with the youth of the British midshipmen. He carefully inspected a group, and then, with an approving smile, told them that he detected in their countenances a high degree of talent, an experience which no doubt was later discussed with more or less caustic comments by these modest young gentlemen.

Hankow, in which, as the visitors learned, only two and a half years earlier hardly one



stone had been left upon another by the rebels, was now a thriving city with well-paved streets, fine shops, and obviously an immense commerce; thus quickly can this supposed stagnant East recover from disaster. The river Han was crowded with junks, and, as usual, Lord Elgin tried to collect information. When he spoke of increased trade with Europeans, his auditors gave perhaps as near an approach to a cheer as Chinamen are capable of—an indication that, whatever the mandarins, jealous of their own privileges, might wish, the people desired increased intercourse with the outside world. But the most persistent cross-questioning could not secure any very trustworthy information about the possibilities of trade, and the independent testimony of no two Chinese could be found to agree.

The people were not accustomed to do much thinking on abstract questions. Oliphant gives an amusing account of his inquiries at Hankow.

“It was hopeless to expect them to comprehend any inquiry which pre-supposed any premises whatever. You could not begin by asking where silk was grown. The introduction necessary to arrive at this result is the incontrovertible statement, ‘There is such a thing as silk.’

“Chinaman repeats eagerly, ‘There is such a thing as silk; oh yes; ah! there is such a thing as silk.’

“‘Silk grows in some provinces; in some it does not.’



"Chinaman repeats, thoughtfully, 'Yes, silk grows in some provinces ; in some it does not.'

"Bystanders, who have taken up the idea with greater rapidity, remark to one another, 'Ah ! true ; in some provinces silk does not grow.'

" 'Does this province produce silk ?'

" 'Yes.'

" 'Does Sz'chuen produce silk ?'

" 'No.'

" 'Then do you carry silk to Sz'chuen ?'

"Chinaman repeats, puzzled, 'What do I carry to Sz'chuen ?'

"Bystanders all repeat, vivaciously, 'What do you carry to Sz'chuen ?'

"Chinaman : 'Sometimes I carry silk to Sz'chuen, and sometimes I carry cotton.'

" 'Does cotton grow in Sz'chuen ?'

" 'Yes.'

" 'And yet you carry cotton to Sz'chuen ?'

" 'Oh ! sometimes I bring cotton here from Sz'chuen.'

"Bystanders, unanimously : 'Sometimes he brings cotton here from Sz'chuen.' "

The sum of information thus to be gleaned was not great, but Lord Elgin learned enough to convince him that hand industry in China would long prove a keen competitor to the machine industry of Europe, and that the opening of the country would not result in the enormous increase of trade that the merchants seemed to expect. In this opinion he was, to some extent, mistaken. The opening of the Yang-tse soon added £3,500,000 a year to the foreign trade of Great



Britain, and the commerce of Shanghai was increased four-fold. Before leaving Hankow, Oliphant ventured the prediction that the "barbarians" would in time rear upon its site a magnificent city: and time has indeed brought changes. Though still only a few foreigners dwell at Hankow, iron works and cotton mills now rear their tall chimneys in its neighbourhood. It will soon be linked by railway with both Pekin and Canton, and daily steamers now ascend the river to this Chicago of modern China.

The interest of new scenes did not keep Lord Elgin from longing for the day when he could turn homewards, and on December 12, 1858, the ships began their journey down the river. It was a ticklish business. To their dismay the navigators found that, since they came up, the river had fallen about five feet, and was still falling. The good old *Furious* charged sandbar after sandbar: but after ten days of trying work there came at length a point where no channel could be found for either her or the *Cruiser*. So Lord Elgin resolved to leave these ships behind in the river, and to go on to Shanghai in the two gunboats, picking up on the way the *Retribution*, left at Woohoo. It was no great misfortune that two British warships should remain in the heart of China for the winter. They could study the surrounding country, and, by keeping open communications with the seaports, accustom the Chinese to the coming and going of foreigners.



So after a final feast "of a spasmodically jovial character," at which Lord Elgin made a short but stirring speech to the officers and company of the *Furious*, the ships separated. Nothing much happened on the way down. At Nankin the rebels, previously so insolent, now showed marked respect for even the two small gunboats. The voyage involved much discomfort; space was so restricted that in the *Lee's* small cabin two slept in cots hung over the table, two on the table, and two under it. But in the eight days which it took to cover the four hundred and fifty miles to Shanghai the company had shaken itself well down into the new surroundings, and were almost sorry to leave the *Lee*. In the end the *Furious* and the *Cruiser* did not remain up the Yang-tse-kiang for the winter. The water suddenly rose, and, though not without some flying leaps over sandbars, the ships reached Shanghai before Lord Elgin had been there a week.

Meanwhile the outlook in China had not really improved. The Government had kept none of its promises to better the situation at Canton; it had not recalled Hwang; the "Braves" were still active in the surrounding country, and the court at Peking seemed resolved to do nothing. Lord Elgin was most anxious to go home; and having made the treaty, he thought others might be left to enforce it. The task of dealing with China was still to be in the hands of a member of his family, for he learned that his brother,



Frederick (afterwards Sir Frederick) Bruce, had been appointed minister to Peking, and was on his way out. Though this seemed a reasonable plea for leaving China it was a mistake to go; probably the one thing to bring the Peking Government to time, was for Lord Elgin to have remained at Shanghai until every promise was fulfilled; and delay would best have been met by a threat to return to Tientsin. But, accepting Chinese assurances for more than they were worth, he resolved to go home.

The last days in China were spent in the neighbourhood of Canton, which was still the danger-point in China. To survey conditions he rode some twelve miles into the interior, to the heart of a disturbed district, followed by a military force of about one thousand men. "The troops were received," he writes, "everywhere as friends. . . . I think this almost the most remarkable thing which has happened since I came here." It showed, indeed, that, for the time at least, the foreign occupation was the safeguard of order. Lord Elgin spent some days in going to Hainan, the most southerly port opened by the treaty which he had just made. He was charmed by a renewed visit to the old Portuguese town of Macao. "I visited the garden of Camoens, and wandered among the narrow up-and-down streets which, with the churches and convents, and air of quiet *vétusté*, remind one of a town on the continent of Europe."



The Hong Kong merchants had not ceased to attack him for not exacting greater concessions from China ; they had especially abused him for failing to secure for them factory sites at Canton which they desired. But his course showed how thorough his work had been. "I found out that very few of them had even taken the trouble of looking at the ground. In short, I found that in my short visits I had seen a great deal more of the sites than they had done." He carried some of the merchants with him from Hong-Kong to Canton, and convinced them that his plan was the best ; and two years later, when he was again at Canton, he could write : "I find that the new factory site, about which I had such a fight with the merchants last time, is a great success. Its merit is now acknowledged by the blindest."

Before leaving for home Lord Elgin was cheered by good news. The military demonstration at Canton produced at least some effect at Peking, and on February 23, 1859, he received at Hong Kong the welcome information that at last Hwang had been dismissed, and that the Emperor was ready to carry out his promise to receive the British Minister at Peking, and there to exchange the ratification of the Treaty of Tientsin.

Though, as the event showed, these promises proved delusive, they seemed to free him from further responsibility, and he joyfully proceeded on his journey. At Ceylon he had an attack of



jungle fever which prostrated him ; but he pressed on to meet his brother at Galle. On April 6, Mr. Bruce arrived there, and Lord Elgin had the great comfort of spending that and a great part of the following day with him, chiefly in discussing Chinese affairs. Then they parted, the younger brother to take up the work in China, that was soon to have unexpected and tragic incidents ; the other to hurry home to join his wife and children, for whose society he had longed. On May 19 he reported himself at the Foreign Office in London, and gave an account of a stewardship ably and firmly discharged.



## CHAPTER VI

### SECOND MISSION TO CHINA, 1860-61

LIKE all men who take a healthy interest in their work, Lord Elgin was gratified to find his policy in China approved at home, and that he had become one of the leading figures in national life. The students of Glasgow University soon chose him to be Lord Rector; and when Lord Palmerston offered him the place of Postmaster-General in the cabinet, he accepted it and entered upon his duties.

But he was destined to have only a short stay at home. The Chinese Government, still reluctant to admit the equal *status* of foreigners, proved stubbornly hostile to the reception at Peking of the foreign ministers, as arranged by the Treaty of Tientsin. When, early in June, 1859, Mr. Bruce and his colleague, M. de Bourboulon, the minister of France, reached Shanghai, they found awaiting them a letter from Kweiliang, one of the commissioners with whom Lord Elgin had treated, urging that the visit to Peking should be abandoned. That it was necessary to exchange at Peking the ratifications of the Treaty, the ministers of Britain,





LORD ELGIN, WITH HIS SON VICTOR ALEXANDER, LORD BRUCE,  
IN 1859







France, and the United States, who took counsel together in the East, all agreed, and accordingly Mr. Bruce with his colleagues set out for the Peiho on June 15th. Arriving on June 20th, he found Admiral Hope with several gunboats already across the bar. The mandarins were playing a deep game. Though in the previous year the Taku Forts had been easily overthrown, now they were fortified on some approach to modern principles, and their garrisons, while declaring that they had no instructions from Peking, refused to permit any of the gunboats to pass up the river. Under the Chinese plan of action, if the attacking fleets successfully forced the barriers, the Peking Government could say that the resistance was not by its orders ; while, if the allies were repulsed, it could claim a victory. To be ready for either emergency, a house for Mr. Bruce was made ready at Peking, while at Taku fighting was resolved upon.

Notwithstanding the menace from the Taku Forts, Mr. Bruce was determined to proceed, and since June 26th was the latest date named for the ratification of the treaty, no time was to be lost. He therefore asked the admiral to remove the barriers with which the Chinese had stopped the passage of the river, and this brought on the crisis.

As usual, the British were too confident. The difficulties were, in fact, very great. Not only was the channel full of iron stakes and guarded by



heavy booms chained together to form a huge raft ; behind the innocent-looking and silent walls of the fort, with the embrasures concealed by matting, guns were trained on the danger spot in the channel, and an army under the Chinese Commander-in-Chief, Sangkolinsin, lay ready for action. After an inadequate reconnaissance, on the 25th the ships tried to break the boom, and their failure was signal. They could not burst through ; in the narrow channel they ran aground, and, thus crowded together, were an easy target. Three ships were sunk, among them the *Lee*, which had been one of Lord Elgin's squadron to ascend the Yang-tse. When the disastrous struggle had lasted for some hours, it was resolved to land a force, and if possible carry the nearest fort by assault. But by this time the tide was low, and the men were landed in slime, into which they sank to their knees. As they advanced across the beach, floundering in deep ditches, they were raked by the fire of the forts with fearful slaughter. Of the storming party some sixty men did reach the last ditch at the foot of the fort as darkness came on, but they waited in vain for reinforcements, and in the end returned. The result of a bloody day's work was 500 casualties in a total force of about 1200. The admiral, who three times had shifted his flag from sinking ships, was wounded ; Captain Vansittart, the commander of the ship conveying Mr. Bruce, was killed ; and the combined forces of France and England,



held at bay by the Chinese, were helpless to exact redress. For some weeks they lay off the mouth of the Peiho trying to remove some damaged vessels under cover of night, and able to do so only through the bad practice of the Chinese gunners, who kept up a steady boom in the darkness, to which no reply could be made. Amid the wounded, the dying, and the dead the work went on until some of the disabled ships were recovered. Then the allies returned to Shanghai to await the help which was slow in coming. For a whole year the Chinese were left to gloat over their victory.

A renewed struggle with China was now inevitable, for, as the event proved, only to force would the Pekin Government yield the principle that it must treat the great European states as equals. Force, France and England were resolved to use, but the United States tried another plan. Disliking menace, Mr. Ward, the American minister, essayed to walk in the sunnier path of peaceful negotiation. He landed at Peh-tang near Taku, and agreed to go to Pekin with a Chinese escort. To Pekin he went, but no chairs or horses were allowed him, and he travelled in the common cart used by the lowest classes in China. He was smuggled into the capital with such secrecy that the people did not know and would not believe he was there, and was kept practically a prisoner under a strong guard in a temple in bad repair. He was told that he might



present the President's letter to the Emperor if he would perform the "kow-tow" — prostrate himself with abject abasement nine times. When he refused, he was asked why, then, had he come. Except on this condition, the Chinese refused to ratify at Peking the treaty between the two countries negotiated at Tientsin. Mr. Ward was informed that on going back to Peh-tang he might exchange the treaty documents with the Governor-General of the province. To Peh-tang he accordingly returned, and the treaty was concluded. The view which the Chinese took of Mr. Ward's mission was revealed in 1860, when Mr. Loch, Lord Elgin's private secretary, saw at Peking furniture with a label stating that it had been issued by the Government for the use of "the American tribute-bearer Ward."

So far was Great Britain from compromise in any form with China, that when Mr. Bruce's repulse at the Taku Forts was known in England, Lord Palmerston talked of sending 25,000 men to Peking. France joined in insistent demands that China should make an ample apology for her conduct, that she should pay an indemnity, and that the Emperor should receive ambassadors at Peking, there to ratify the Treaty of Tientsin. But China held out stubbornly. The demand for redress was, she said, too "insubordinate and extravagant" for discussion. Her diplomacy can understand only imminent and pressing dangers, and the delay of a year in collecting a sufficient



force to punish the outrage at Taku encouraged the war-party; though, as the war-cloud drew nearer, direct negatives were rarely forthcoming, there was no sign that any real satisfaction would be given. For the Emperor to receive ambassadors at Peking without exacting the humble reverence due by subjects, was to abandon his claim of universal dominion.

Lord Elgin's critics said that, having made the mess in China by not going to Peking and insisting upon a permanent embassy there, it was his duty to return to mend it. His friends thought that his combined tact and firmness, and his thorough understanding of the situation, made him the best person to solve the new difficulty. Really decisive was the outbreak of public opinion that if war could be prevented, he was the man to prevent it, and that if a struggle proved inevitable, he would both conduct it with vigour and carry it on no longer than was absolutely necessary. He was, therefore, bound to accept an unwelcome second mission to China. Unwelcome it was indeed. He was weary of the East. "Somehow or other," he wrote, "I feel as if I were fifty years older than when I entered on my last mission." \* And the ties at home were very strong. He had just begun his official career as a Cabinet Minister. His children were at an age when a father's care in overseeing their education was most necessary ;

\* His tone was rendered the more sombre at this time by the death of his mother at Paris on April 1, 1860.



he must leave not only them but Lady Elgin, who could not join him on these diplomatic missions ; he must give up " that peaceful home life towards which," he said, " I am always aspiring." But he accepted the call of duty, and the spirit in which he did it is shown in what he wrote on the voyage out. " Can I do anything to prevent England calling down on herself God's curses for brutalities committed on another feeble oriental race ? Or are all my exertions to result only in the extension of the area over which Englishmen are to exhibit how hollow and superficial are both their civilization and their Christianity ? . . . The tone of the two or three men connected with mercantile houses in China whom I find on board is all for blood and massacre on a great scale. I hope they will be disappointed." Baron Gros, his former French colleague, also returned to finish his work in China ; and in the first days of May, 1860, the two ambassadors were together in a " Peninsular and Oriental " steamer approaching the shore of Egypt. Lord Elgin spent a part of his time in re-reading, and for the most part destroying, many old letters, and there is a note of melancholy in his writing to Lady Elgin of the " desolate home," desolate because of the absence of the master who had before him a most uncertain prospect. " There is only one bright side to the picture," he wrote ; " it is very unlikely that my absence can be of long duration." He had a vague hope that before he reached the East the trouble might be



settled, and he himself recalled. "On the whole, I lean to the opinion that there will be no war, and no cause for the appearance of our special embassies on the scene." This was not to be; only an army at Peking was finally to reduce Chinese obstinacy, and Lord Elgin was destined to inflict upon China heavy punishment for renewed treachery.

Though passing over familiar ground, in Egypt he had a new sensation by a visit to the Pyramids, which, to avoid the excessive heat, was made at night. The Pyramids themselves did not greatly impress him, but the moonlight view of the mysterious Sphinx touched his imaginative vein. He writes, "We pushed on over the heaps of sand and *débris*, or probably covered-up tombs, which surround the base of the Pyramids, when we suddenly came in face of the most remarkable object on which my eye ever lighted. Somehow or other I had not thought of the Sphinx till I saw her before me. There she was in all her imposing magnitude crouched on the margin of the Desert, looking over the fertile valley of the Nile, and her gaze fixed on the east, as if in earnest expectation of the sunrising. And such a gaze! The mystical light and deep shadows cast by the moon, gave to it an intensity which I cannot attempt to describe. To me it seemed a look earnest, searching, but unsatisfied. For a long time I remained transfixed, endeavouring to read the meaning conveyed by this



wonderful eye; but I was struck after a while by what seemed a contradiction in the expression of the eye and the mouth. There was a singular gentleness and hopefulness about the lines of the mouth, which appeared to be in contrast with the anxious eye. Mr. Bowlby [*The Times* correspondent], who was a very *sympathique* inquirer into the significance of this wonderful monument, agreed with me in thinking that the upper part of the face spoke of the intellect striving, and striving vainly, to solve the mystery—(What mystery? the mystery, shall we say of God's universe, or of man's destiny?)—while the lower indicated a moral conviction that all must be well, and that this truth would in good time be made manifest." Though, perhaps, a little fanciful, this is still the revelation of a fine intelligence. In humorous contrast with these deep emotions was the attitude of a Frenchman in the party, who only said, "*Ah! que c'est drôle,*" while his companions stood transfixed and awestruck. Lord Elgin lay down to sleep on the shingly sand of the desert, and just before sunrise he climbed the Pyramid. It was not an easy task for a somewhat portly man of fifty, and he thought the view scarcely worth the labour.

But he had more serious business than sight-seeing. He met in Egypt the passengers of a Calcutta mail steamer returning to Europe, and eagerly questioned them in regard to China, but learned little that was new. The contrast between



the ruddy health of the east-bound passengers with the pale faces of those returning was an object-lesson in the effects of climate. When his ship, the *Simla*, arrived at Ceylon there was still no China news. But here, at Point-de-Galle, the monotony of which he sometimes complained was broken. To Mr. Bowlby, *The Times* correspondent, he had remarked that Point-de-Galle was to him a place of ill omen; for there, on his previous trip to China, he had first heard the dire news of the Indian Mutiny. The link of ill fortune was not yet broken. From the *Simla* to the *Malabar* the effects of the two ambassadors were transferred, and the voyage to China was to be continued within about twenty-four hours. The morning of May 22nd broke dark and threatening. In Galle harbour, much exposed and almost an open roadstead, with safe anchorage for very few ships, there were terrific gusts of wind and a heavy sea. But in face of the storm, the *Simla*, on which Sir Hugh Rose had embarked for the return voyage to Calcutta, made her way out of the harbour about noon amid ringing cheers from Lord Elgin's following; and, in spite of the fury of the elements, he and Baron Gros, to the thunder of a salute of thirty-eight guns from the fort, embarked at one o'clock. But the ship was not ready to start, and, half wet through, the two ambassadors sat on a bench under an awning and waited. Not until 1.30 were the *Malabar's* fires started for getting up steam. At 2.30 the captain



was in his cabin changing his dress, when a terrific squall struck the ship on her port side and caused her to heel over completely. A mooring hawser snapped ; the ship swung round and struck stern first on the Beluvaka, or Hospital Reef, of sharp and pointed coral, close to which she lay. With the shock the saloon skylight came crashing down, the lamps were shivered, and from the horrible thumping and grating it seemed as if the ship's plates must soon all give way. The huge waves made it difficult for small boats to approach the *Malabar* ; only two from the twenty vessels in the port, essayed the task, and of these one was swamped and the other barely escaped this fate ; for some time, too, the ship's boats were not ready for use. But the more imminent danger was soon over. Suddenly the wind veered ; the *Malabar* swung clear of the rocks, her anchor held, and she rode at comparative ease.

By pouring oil upon the coals, steam was got up about 3.30. But a new danger was now apparent ; the ship's after-compartment had been so injured that she was filling rapidly, and threatened to sink by the stern. As the pumps would only work when the engines were in operation, Captain Granger, an excellent seaman, decided to steam away from the anchorage, so as with the aid of the pumps to save ship and cargo if possible. Failing as yet to realize the extent of the damage, for a moment he had the thought of putting to sea. As the ship moved away,



partial panic seized not only the passengers, but some of her officers. The chief engineer rushed on deck crying, "In the name of God, captain, don't proceed to sea. We are in a sinking state; beach her at once." To inspire confidence, the two ambassadors sat quietly on the deck conversing as if no danger were imminent, and during the hissing of the fiercest wind, Lord Elgin reminded Mr. Bowlby of the ominous associations of Galle Harbour. The passengers crowded round him: "Will not your Lordship order the boats to be lowered?" "Will you not protest against going to sea?" "Will you not speak to the captain?" He reminded them that he was not in authority upon the ship; but at last he sent Colonel Crealock to the captain with his compliments, to inquire if he were going to sea. The seaman's gruff answer was, "Going to sea! Why, we're going to the bottom." It was, in fact, doubtful whether the ship would live to cross to a sandy beach at the head of the harbour, for which the captain now headed: an old tar on board told those about him to keep their eyes on the mast; "I don't expect we shall get across, and if we sink it may be above water." Lord Elgin's secretary, Mr. Loch, who had served in the navy, got the captain's leave to prepare one of the quarter boats for lowering. As the vessel neared the shore, the captain made one more effort to save her. He dropped anchor just outside the line of surf, but the water-logged ship



was now unmanageable. She swung round, struck heavily stern-first on the beach and sank, the water rising to her main deck.

In spite of the difficulty of launching boats in the heavy sea, all the passengers were got safely to shore. Undoubtedly Lord Elgin and Baron Gros, by their coolness, had inspired confidence that prevented extreme panic, and they saw all the other passengers safely embarked before they left the ship. The consequences of the wreck threatened to be serious. In the hurry of the transfer from the *Simla* to the *Malabar*, even the luggage, marked "Cabin," had been put into the hold, and, of course, it went down with the ship. Not even Lord Elgin's portmanteau, which had been taken to his cabin, was saved. It was in charge of a servant whom he trusted to do what he could. But this man showed exclusive zeal for his own safety. When the ship was beached he hailed a native boat, tossed into it his own portmanteau, and made for shore alone. Lord Elgin's personal effects, his stars and badges, the Order of the Thistle and of the Bath, his clothing, his papers and his books, lay at the bottom in Galle Harbour. Baron Gros's losses were similar. The powers to treat with China, which each Ambassador possessed, went down, and, but for their recovery, though it was in a half-ruined condition, delay might have been involved in waiting for the arrival of new powers. For two weeks Lord



Elgin remained at Galle, interested most of all in watching divers slowly fish up his effects from the sea, and studying the effect of salt water upon gold and silver plate. "As yet," he wrote some days after the wreck, "I have got nothing but some cases of champagne, and a box of linen. Gros's plate has been recovered. All the silver is black, and his knives with ivory handles destroyed, but the gilt plate looks as well as ever. He had a great apparatus for photography, etc., all entirely destroyed. . . . I have . . . got up the box which contained my decorations, and, by the aid of a jeweller here, they are now as good as ever." Not until the end of June, more than a year after the repulse at the mouth of the Peiho, did he reach Shanghai.

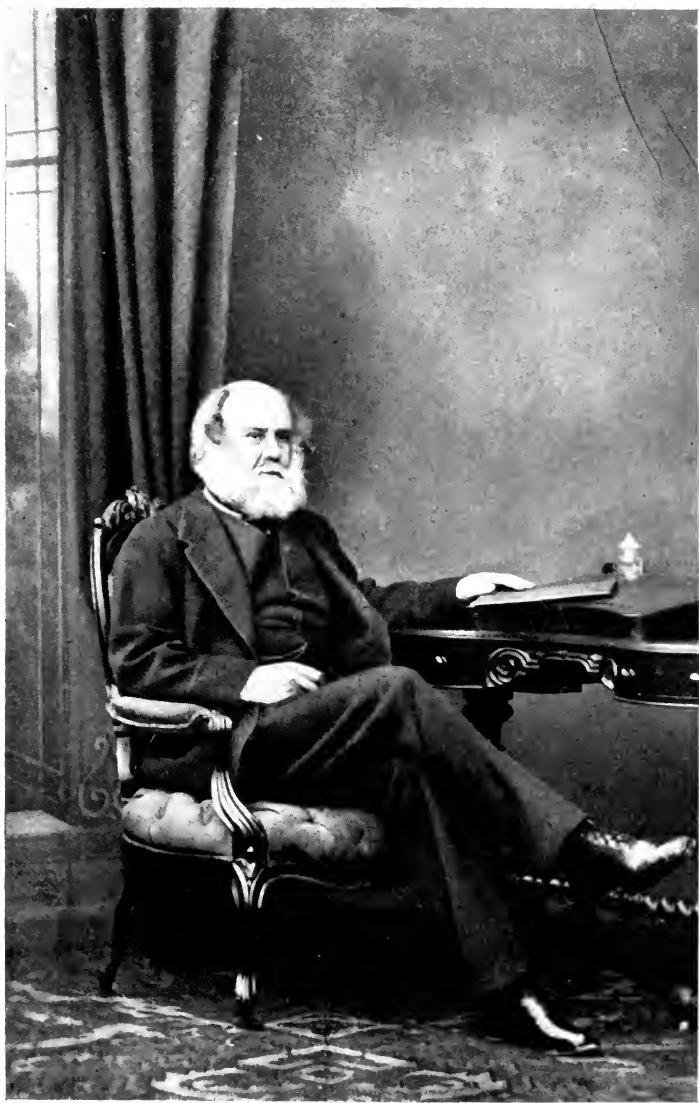
For this long interval Mr. Frederick Bruce had been powerless to make any impression upon the Chinese Government. To his task he brought high endowments of character. "Frederick," wrote Lord Elgin, "is a noble-hearted man, perhaps the noblest I have ever met with in my experience of my fellows."\* But only through coercion could anything be done. The mandarins were utterly ignorant of their own weakness. During the two years since Lord Elgin had gone up the Yang-tse river, the desolating rebellion had spread to the very gates of Shanghai, and

\* "Everything about him was grand and massive, and, but for a certain leonine indolence of nature, he must, I think, have achieved great things had he been spared longer to this world."—Sir Horace Rumbold, "Recollections of a Diplomatist."



it now threatened to submerge that city as it had done so many others. Chinese and foreigners at Shanghai were alike panic-stricken. They kept barricaded the roads leading from the city, and volunteer forces were drilling to assist the regular troops. So imminent was the danger that Ho, the Governor-General of the province, now actually made the amazing proposal that the forces which had come to coerce China should assist her to drive back the rebels. If they did so, Ho was sure that the Emperor's heart would be touched, and that he would as a reward give the most favourable consideration to the desires of the allies. At the same time, while so weak that the allies were obliged to leave a force to defend Shanghai against the rebels, the Imperial Court was perfectly ready to defy one or a dozen European powers, and steadily refused to make amends for the conduct of the previous year. To teach China her lesson, Lord Elgin saw that no great force was necessary. Before leaving England he told Lord Palmerston that he had rather take 5000 than 25,000 men to Peking; with 5000 he could move rapidly, and follow threat with action—the only way to impress Chinese officials—while a large force must move slowly in order to protect its communications, and bring up sufficient supplies. The cost, too, of a large expedition constantly occupied his prudent mind. "What will the House of Commons say," he asked, "when the bill, which has to be paid for





THE HON. SIR FREDERICK W. A. BRUCE, G.C.B.







this war, is presented? The expense is enormous; to my mind utterly disproportionate to the objects to be effected." A large, not a small, army was sent out; after the reverse of the previous year, military advisers declared that only a huge force could make success certain.

Talien-wan Bay, a place that, since 1860, has more than once witnessed striking scenes in the pageantry of war, was the rendezvous of the British force in China, while Cheefoo, on the south side of the Pecheli Strait, was that of the French. Lord Elgin arrived at Talien-wan on July 9, and soon a great naval and military force, containing some thirty thousand men, was gathered there. The shores of Talien-wan Bay became for the time a British parade ground, and with its clear brilliant sky and life-giving air, the newcomers from more southerly regions were charmed. It was the most delightful season of the year.

"The apples are 'hanging fine on the trees,'" wrote Mr. Bowlby, *The Times* correspondent, "wild flowers scent the air, the cuckoo is heard in the distance, bees, butterflies, and dragonflies are humming and circling round our heads, and transport us back to the lanes and orchards of Devonshire or Gloucestershire."

The people of the country seemed well to do. Their houses were comfortable. The villas outside the town had large gardens. One wonders



how much of this prosperity has been retained after China's war with Japan in 1894, and Japan's war with Russia in 1904, each concentrated in some degree in this region! In 1860, so far from being depressed by invasion, the natives of the region seemed well pleased to have it so. They showed little curiosity as to the reasons for this sudden inroad, and little interest in the further plans of the invaders. Such high things were no affairs of theirs, and, meanwhile, the visitors paid good prices for what they needed.

The "model army," of which Lord Elgin could speak at this time, had at its head General Sir Hope Grant, a fine type of British officer, humane and profoundly religious : a few years later, when he was dying, and a young aide-de-camp who went to see him broke down at the sight of the pallid face of the general, he said, "Oh, my dear boy, to die is nothing ; it is only going from one room into the other." "I am particularly struck," wrote Lord Elgin of the general, "by the grin of delight with which the men of a regiment of Sikhs (infantry) who were with him at Lucknow greet him whenever they meet him. I observed this to him and he said, 'Oh, we were always good friends. I used to visit them when they were sick, poor fellows. . . . Their wives used to come in numbers and walk over the house where Lady Grant and I lived.'" Such a man was to Lord Elgin a kindred spirit, and they worked in



admirable harmony during the troubled months that followed.

At Talien-wan there was much to see and do. Great Britain had learned something from the Crimean War. Men and horses were alike in excellent condition, and every branch of the service was efficient. On shore a great review was held, and the new Armstrong gun, now for the first time to see active service, amazed the onlookers by its tremendous range. "From one," says Lord Elgin, "a shell was fired which went over the hills and vanished into space; no one knows whither." During a field day on shore he saw what was then the novel feat of a cavalry man at full gallop pulling a tent-peg from the ground with the point of his spear or slicing an orange with a sabre. One day there was a more sombre scene, when, in the navy, sovereign justice was vindicated against a poor wretch, depraved by drink, who had made a brutal attempt at murder. Small boats, one from each ship, formed a silent circle round the central scene of the grim tragedy, and the rigging of the warships was manned by all hands to witness the execution. "Punctually at half-past one the prisoner was brought out, stripped of his uniform. He was deadly pale, but his step was firm and he walked without support. A rope was passed round his neck, the signal given, and in two seconds the bowmen had run him off to the foreyard arm. Then a loop was loosed, and the body fell with a



tremendous jerk at least six feet. A couple of struggles and all was over." But not such a scene, not the imminent prospect of severe fighting, chiefly occupied the minds of the host encamped in that hilly country. Far away in England a prize fight between Heenan and Sayers for the championship was about to take place, and it was the one supreme topic of discussion among all ranks, from the Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston, at home, to the humble private of the army in China. The French thought their allies had gone mad.

Lord Elgin made a visit to the French base at Cheefoo. Undoubtedly rapid progress in the expedition was checked not by the English, but by the French. They had no convenient base on the way to China such as the English had in Hong Kong and in India. While in the Crimea they had more men and had spent more money than their British allies, in China they had a small army, and were spending only a fraction of the British disbursements. They had brought in pieces from France small iron gunboats, but though at Toulon these could be put together in thirty-six hours, in China it took two weeks, and at best they were not very serviceable. But in time both armies were ready to begin active operations against Peking. Lord Elgin found that French officers had at first reported the barrier of soft mud on the coast, on both sides of the mouth of the Peiho, to be a difficulty almost insuperable to



the landing of a military force in that region. But after a conference between the leaders a combined landing at Peh-tang, a few miles north of the Taku Forts, was agreed upon, and towards the end of July both armies were ready to move. The rendezvous where the allied armies were to meet was at sea, about fifteen miles from Peh-tang, and out of sight of land. Without a hitch or accident the British force at Talien-wan, including 2000 cavalry horses and 3000 mules, was embarked; each transport as filled was towed off to its place in the naval array by a gunboat, tiny in comparison with its immense burden, and on July 26 some 200 British ships, under sail and steam, and making an impressive spectacle, were heading down Talien-wan Bay before a stiff east wind. On reaching the rendezvous each ship took up its assigned place; the French arrived promptly, and at the end of July a naval and military force, containing 40,000 men, three-fourths of whom were British, lay off the doomed little town of Peh-tang.

Then, even before the allies struck a blow, was seen the grim tragedy of war. At Talien-wan, instead of suffering, the natives of the country had gained by the invasion, for they had a new and profitable market: when the soldiers had embarked, Sir Hope Grant had asked the villagers to assess the damages to their property, and he paid promptly the small sum, about £40, which they claimed. No doubt the people of Peh-tang



looked for similar treatment, and they gave the allies a most friendly reception. "The war," they said, "was a Taku affair, with which Peh-tang had nothing to do." On August 1 the landing was made. To reach a firm footing the troops had to wade through vilely smelling slush; few of them wore anything but their upper garments, and one brigadier attracted attention by his simple uniform of only a shirt, and by the elaborate profanity with which he directed operations. But, even when the armies had reached firm ground, this consisted of only a narrow causeway surrounded by a wide sea of mud. They could pitch no tents; and, since rain was imminent, it would have been fatal to leave a great force in this situation. The only oasis in the desert of mud was the town of Peh-tang itself. Its insignificant fort had been promptly abandoned as the army approached; the inhabitants were most willing to help the invaders, and one of them, an intelligent shop-keeper, by pointing out the situation of dangerous pit-falls and mines, which the retiring Chinese garrison had arranged, undoubtedly saved many lives. But this could not save Peh-tang. It was necessary to move into it at once, and to destroy whole streets of houses to make room for the quays and wharves necessary for military purposes. At a moment's notice the miserable inhabitants, women with babies in their arms, old men and young girls, were cast into the streets. Junks carried off a few to other places, but the



fate of the greater part of the population of more than twenty thousand remained a mystery. Forty or fifty women committed suicide; others were destroyed by their relations. "I passed a box in the street," says Mr. Bowlby, "I lifted the lid and found the bodies of two young girls of fifteen or sixteen who had been poisoned by their friends lest they should fall into the hands of the barbarians."

Wretched and sordid as was Peh-tang, its poor houses yet held much valuable property in silks and furs and embroidery. While the British general gave the strictest orders against pillage, and enforced them, the French exerted much less control; but the most ruthless oppressors of the helpless Chinese were their own countrymen, the coolies brought from Canton or Shanghai. To the inhabitant who had revealed the dangerous secret of the mines and traps, Mr. Parkes had promised special protection. Relying on this, the man had remained in his house, but, while Mr. Parkes was ignorant of what was happening, coolies entered the house eight or ten times, and the French three or four, pillaging, breaking the furniture, and abusing the inmates. At length, towards evening, these resolved upon suicide, and all took poison. When Mr. Parkes arrived, he found the man's family dead and he himself dying. A powerful emetic saved his life; but when he saw the ruins of his home and himself wifeless and childless, he reproached his rescuers for their



pity, and wished that he too might die. *The Times* correspondent says that he did not see a single British soldier engaged in pillage, and that he did see two soldiers severely flogged for having in their possession pigs which they must have stolen. Nor were any British soldiers concerned in the terrible scenes with women which are not to be described.

A considerable Chinese army threatened the advance from Peh-tang, and its leader Sangkolinsin, the Commander-in-Chief, was thought by the Chinese to be a formidable soldier. He seemed to have an abundant supply of cavalry, a portion of which was well mounted, brave, and resolute. But other parts were less efficient, and a story went the rounds of the allied camp as to how they had been secured. A force of 20,000 cavalry is supposed to be kept ready at Peking for any emergency. But so lax was Chinese administration that the General in command of this force found that he was called upon to parade his men with their mounts only for an occasional inspection, and that at such times he could borrow or hire the necessary horses for a few days; he therefore left his men without mounts, drawing, however, from the public treasury the price for the full equipment. When the army landed at Peh-tang a review of the cavalry at Peking was called for, and the borrowed horses were duly paraded. But Sangkolinsin, who knew the truth, promptly sent off this improvised cavalry by



forced marches to meet the allies. Naturally they did not prove a very effective fighting force; most of them were armed only with bows and arrows; and they did little to check the advance from Peh-tang by land to the Taku Forts. This advance was aided by the use of the new Armstrong gun, which now proved a most effective weapon. "What is the use of fighting against men whose guns carry eight miles?" cried some of the helpless Chinese, who fled panic-stricken. Yet the allies had no light task. It was not easy to reach the northern forts across the protecting mud flats, and they were carried by storm only after three and a half hours of hard hand-to-hand fighting. The defenders were forced back at the point of the bayonet; Lord Elgin saw heaps of them lying dead when, on August 21, he followed the assaulting army into the fort.\* The defences on the south side of the river, being now untenable, were promptly surrendered. By August 23 there remained no further obstacle to the ascent of the river to Tientsin.

Correspondence found at Taku described Mr. Bruce and his French colleague M. Bourbonlon as inseparable in craft, and ferocious and

\* The British, of course, suffered some, but not heavy, losses. The men realized that but little interest was taken in England in the campaign, and doubted whether their valour would ever be heard of. "Will the Queen know what a fight it was?" *The Times* correspondent was asked on one of the hospital ships by men who knew that their complacent countrymen would hardly think that there could be a severe fight against Chinese.



treacherous by disposition; it denounced the "extravagant and rebellious" language of their demands. The day of humiliation for such curs was coming. "These barbarians for the last twenty years have been feeding their pride. It is not to be expected that in one day they will bring down their heads, lay back their ears, wag their tails, and ask for mercy." To hasten the triumph of justice, the Governor-General had offered a reward of 1000 taels (£333) for Lord Elgin or Baron Gros, dead or alive, and lower prices for other barbarians, down to 5 taels for a common soldier. This tone gave no promising opening for diplomacy, and when the Governor-General of the province tried to draw Lord Elgin into negotiations, he met all advances with the insistent demand for the acceptance of the terms already named, and with the assertion that he would sign another treaty only at Peking. As soon as possible, therefore, the advance to Tientsin and Peking was begun. That Lord Elgin could really go to Peking, the Chinese, in their fool's paradise, thought as unlikely as is to the English the prospect that the French can occupy London. With no great distress the court had heard of attacks on other places, but the capital no one had ever ventured to attack; no foreign arm could reach that stronghold; it, at least, was safe. Sangkolinsin assured the Imperial Council that his army could surround and destroy the small allied army if it marched against Peking. Yet he



did almost nothing to check the advance from Taku. The bridges remained intact, and the people of the country, with a fine absence of vulgar patriotism, showed themselves ready, for a small wage, to work at mending the roads. Lord Elgin went up to Tientsin by the river as he had gone in 1858, but the troops marched through a country rich with ripening grapes, pears, apples, and other fruit. The people found consolation for their country's woes in an excellent market for their own products. Many refugees were met on the road hurrying back to Taku, now that it was safely in the foreigners' hands. A muscular Chinaman, taking back four of his countrywomen in a single wheel-barrow, was one of the picturesque spectacles of the route. Pigs wallowing in the mire, innumerable curs basking in the sun, cutaneous diseases visible in half the men of the country, abominable smells everywhere, were real if not attractive accompaniments of the march of the army.

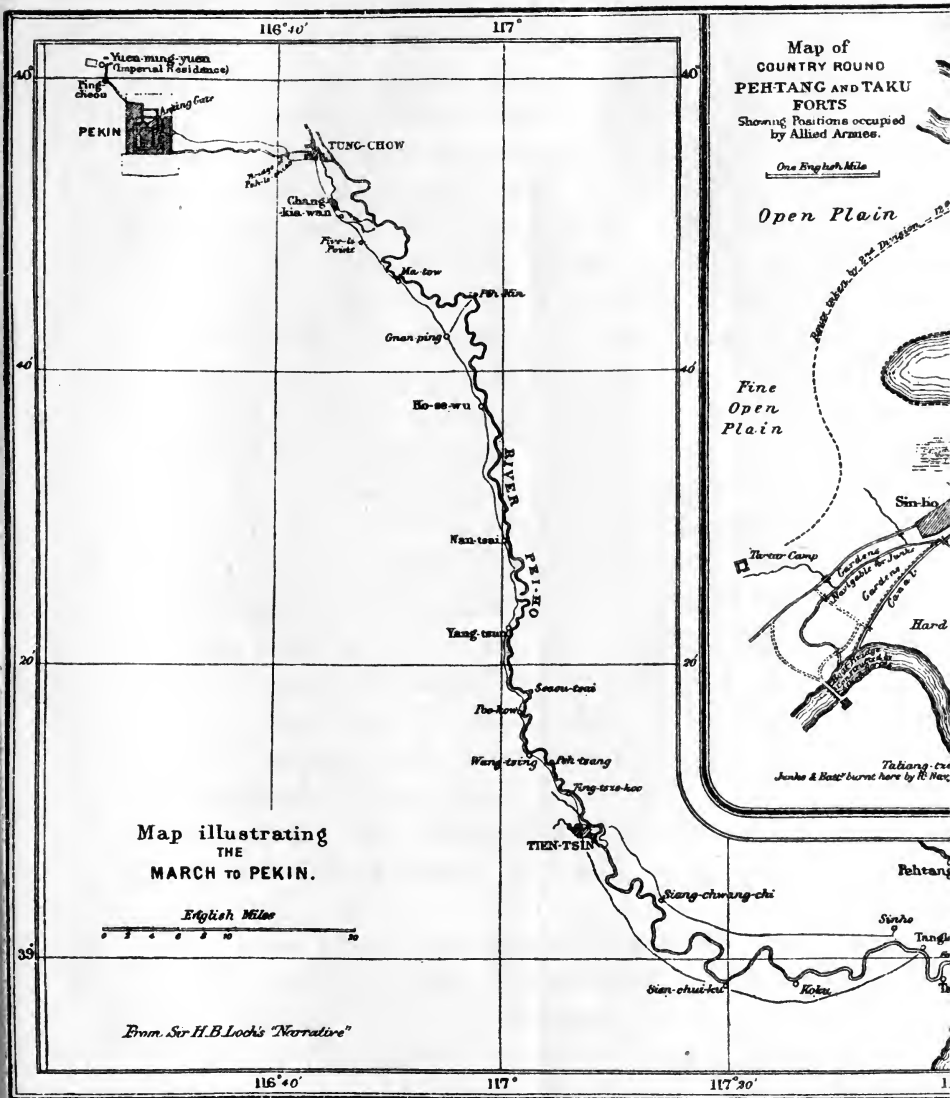
At Tientsin the Governor, Hang-Fu, with amazing failure to understand facts, had desired the British Admiral when he reached the place to consider himself as a guest—effrontery that called forth a sufficiently plain exposition of the military situation. The Tientsin authorities were ordered to furnish carts for the further advance of the army, and, until these were forthcoming, the city prefect was kept in prison and denied the privilege that he desired, of committing suicide. When



Lord Elgin arrived, he took up his residence in the yamun of one of the leading corn-merchants of Tientsin. The house was so superior to the ordinary Chinese yamun that it even had glazed windows, and in its numerous courts and rooms the ambassador and his suite made themselves as comfortable as the mosquitoes and heat would permit.

China was really helpless. While the military party still breathed defiance, Kweiliang came from Peking, as he had come two years earlier, and declared that China yielded what the allies so persistently demanded. After some discussion Lord Elgin reached an agreement with him, but at the moment for final acceptance of the terms he admitted that he must first get the consent of Peking. This breach of faith, to secure delay, Lord Elgin met by breaking off negotiations and declaring that he would treat again only with fully authorized commissioners, and in the immediate neighbourhood of Peking. The truth is that the Chinese counsels were divided between a peace party and a war party, and much depended upon prompt action by the allies. The delay of the military authorities caused Lord Elgin to fret and fume. From Tientsin to Peking the distance is only about sixty miles, and a menacing force pushed forward quickly to support his demands would probably have united Chinese counsels in favour of conciliation. But the generals declared that with their great force they could not move



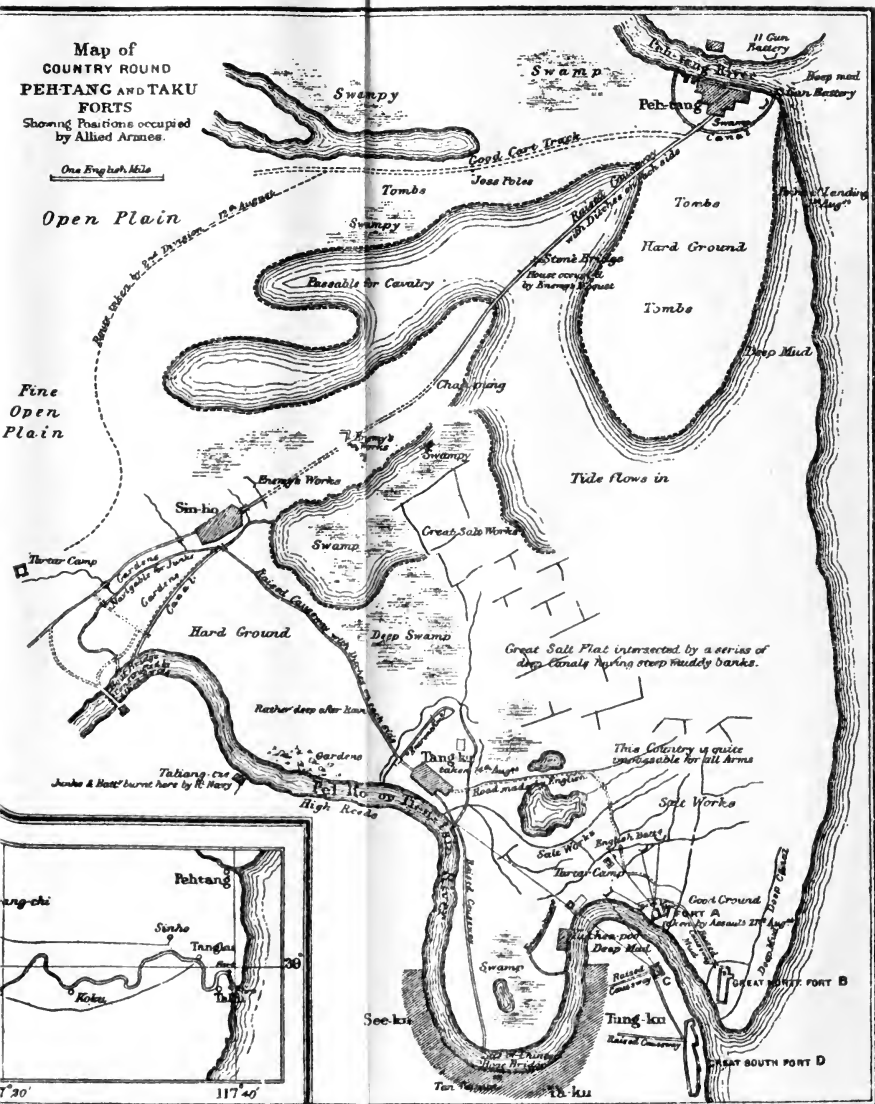




One English Mile

*Open Plain*

*Fine  
Open  
Plain*





rapidly. This gave the war-party, headed by Sangkolinsin, time to exert its influence, and was a direct cause of the terrible events that followed. Slowly from Tientsin towards Peking the allied army advanced in the second week of September. To take forward the *impedimenta* native drivers were used. The supply was generally abundant, but one morning no carters were to be found: they had decamped in the night, as the result of a threat by the Chinese authorities, and for a time the British, deprived of their usual help, had to shift for themselves. There were some comical scenes when men, wholly unaccustomed to the task, essayed to drive reluctant mules in carts; and Lord Elgin thought the British soldier did not shine as a handy man. "Our soldiers do so little for themselves," he wrote on September 14, "and their necessities are so great, that we move but slowly. Our present party consists of about 1500 fighting men; but we count about 4000 mouths, and all must have abundantly of the best. The French (I admit they take more out of the country, and sometimes, perhaps, by rougher methods) carry on their backs several days' provisions. They work in all sorts of ways for the army. The contrast is, I must say, very striking."

On the day before this was written the army reached Ho-see-woo, a city within easy striking distance of Peking. As the advance continued, almost daily entreaties had come to Lord Elgin



from the Chinese that he would halt the army and make terms. At Ho-see-woo he thought the time had come to see whether the Chinese had at length learned their lesson, and he now sent forward Mr. Wade and Mr. Parkes, both of whom understood the Chinese language, to ascertain the real attitude of the Chinese Government. At Tung-chow, about twelve miles from Peking, these gentlemen finally met new commissioners appointed by the Emperor—Tsai, Prince of I, the Emperor's cousin Minyan, and Hangki, all men of high rank. After an eight hours' discussion the Chinese Commissioners finally consented to comply with Lord Elgin's repeated demands. It was further agreed that the allied army should advance from Ho-see-woo to a designated point for encampment, about twenty miles from Peking, and that the ambassadors, with a powerful military escort, should proceed thence to Peking itself, and there finally ratify the treaty. Meanwhile each side was to report to headquarters. Parkes and Loch returned to Lord Elgin with the cheering prospect that the end of the trouble was in sight.

On the Chinese side the result of the report by the Commissioners to the Emperor and his council was unexpected. Sangkolinsin, the Commander-in-Chief, declared that no concession should be made to the insolent barbarians, since his army could easily drive them back; and he vehemently opposed the terms agreed to by the Commissioners. With him he carried the



Emperor. According to European standards, the Chinese were either bound by the action of the Commissioners if they had been given adequate powers, or if the Imperial Council had the right to say the final word, they were bound at once to notify the allies that the agreement could not be carried out. But China is not like Europe. Sangkolinsin determined to lie in ambush for the allied army, and to attack it as it advanced; he was also ready to seize and hold as hostages, under the menace of death, the diplomatic agents whom the allies should send forward within the Chinese lines to complete the arrangements. His devices were barbaric; but, perhaps, the Chinese were doing only what Europeans would have done in the Middle Ages.

On Sunday, September 16, the members of the British Embassy attended a Church Service held in a temple at Ho-see-woo, the last service on earth of some of those who were looking forward with high expectancy to the proceedings of the morrow. All unsuspecting of treachery, Lord Elgin sent forward, on the next day, a party to Tung-chow to make final arrangements for the advance of the Embassy and the army. Mr. Parkes was the leader. "One of the most remarkable men I have ever met," Lord Elgin wrote at this time; "for energy, courage, and ability combined, I do not know where I could find his match; and this joined to a facility of speaking Chinese . . . makes him at present the man of



the situation." Lord Elgin's private secretary, Mr. Loch, accompanied Mr. Parkes; Mr. De Normann, one of Mr. Bruce's staff, and Mr. Bowlby, *The Times* correspondent, were also allowed to go; the whole with an escort of twenty-six soldiers, twenty of them Sikhs, under Lieutenant Anderson. Colonel Walker and Mr. Thompson went with the civilians to look over the ground, for the General, Sir Hope Grant, had decided to advance on the next day with his army to the proposed encampment. It was a bright, cool morning for the long ride. Once or twice the party was stopped by Chinese soldiers, but the magic words "To the Commissioners" removed all obstacles, and at half-past ten they reached Tung-chow. They were escorted to a temple, and told that the Chinese Commissioners would meet them at one o'clock, and meanwhile they had time to wash and breakfast. The meeting with the Chinese Commissioners took an unexpected turn when they declared it to be utterly impossible that Lord Elgin should deliver his credentials to the Emperor in person. The Prince of I's tone was particularly offensive, and the audience with the Emperor was the point to which he took most exception. However, after long disputes, by evening an agreement was reached, and that night the British party slept in Tung-chow, feeling that all serious difficulties were at an end. Far, indeed, was this from the truth; that night the war-party finally triumphed





Bellevue  
Governor's wife  
Henry N. Parker







in the councils of China, and it was decided to attack the advancing allied army.

By daybreak, Loch, Parkes, and some others were in the saddle, returning to meet the advancing allied army, and to guide them to the place for encampment agreed upon, while Bowlby and De Normann, with a guard of eighteen Sikhs, under Lieutenant Anderson, remained in Tung-chow to await Lord Elgin's arrival. Shopping and sightseeing were to be their diversions, and, as soon as possible, Parkes and Loch were to rejoin them, to get a house for Lord Elgin and his suite, and to complete details of the Convention. To their amazement, Parkes and Loch, as they rode back toward the British headquarters, saw that the very spot where the allied army was to camp was occupied by a Chinese force. They saw, too, on all sides, considerable numbers of Chinese troops in motion. The presence of these troops was concealed from the advancing allies by fields of millet, with stalks ten or twelve feet high, by embankments and other obstacles. Parkes and Loch became more and more suspicious that treachery was intended, and when they had nearly reached the British lines, Parkes, who knew not what fear was, resolved upon riding back with two soldiers to Tung-chow, to tell the Prince of I himself what he had seen, and if possible to rescue the party left there. Loch with two Sikhs rode to warn General Hope Grant that he was marching into a trap, while Colonel Walker and Mr.



Thompson with five soldiers were to continue upon an embankment near the Chinese front to make observations, and to gallop for their lives if they saw that hostilities were really intended.

To most of the British party then within the Chinese lines, the hurried events of the next few hours brought tragic death. Colonel Walker's small force, indeed, escaped. They rode up and down the embankment for some time, and when the Chinese tried to seize them, made a successful dash for their own army, and reached safety; the volley fired after them was the beginning of open fighting. Loch, too, reached his objective point, and warned Sir Hope Grant. He might have remained in safety, but since Parkes and the others were still in Tung-chow, he chivalrously asked leave to share their danger and to carry back the General's orders to return at once to headquarters. He took with him two Sikhs. As it was desirable to send also a military officer on the perilous journey, Colonel, afterwards Lord, Wolseley was told off by the General for the duty, but when he was found to be otherwise engaged, Captain Brabazon was allowed to go, not without mental protests from Loch, who writes, with noble simplicity, "The task I had undertaken was an almost hopeless one, and there was no use endangering more lives than were already in jeopardy." The General agreed to delay active fighting for two hours, if possible, to give them a chance to return. It is a marvel that Loch's





LORD LOCH







party should have been able to ride back unmolested through the Chinese lines to Tung-chow. They did so, it is said, only because many of the Chinese believed that they bore the surrender of the allied army.

At Tung-chow they found the Sikh soldiers on guard, but the gentlemen were still shopping in the town. Already Parkes had left for them a note warning any who should return to get ready to escape, and he had gone on to the Prince of I to remonstrate against the apparent treachery. The absent sightseers soon returned, and then all were ready for a dash for safety, if only Parkes would come. Loch and De Normann grew so anxious that, taking two soldiers, they rode after him into the town. Within half a mile they met him; he had seen the Commissioners, and the Prince of I had told him in an offensive tone that, owing to the exacting British demands, "there could be no peace, there must be war." Parkes noted down the words in writing, that he might report them exactly to his superiors, and, taking respectful leave, had then rapidly galloped away. At once the party set out on their perilous ride, for Parkes, too, realized the urgent need of haste. They had ten or twelve miles to go through the heart of the Chinese army. A fighting chance of success they still had. Chinese discipline is slack, and it was just possible that a flag of truce and a confident air might carry them through, if active fighting had not begun all along the line. Much



depended upon their horses. Unfortunately, Bowlby and De Normann were badly mounted, and this delayed the party. Some one must lead, and when Brabazon said, "I vote Parkes decides what is to be done," they all assented. When, before going far, they found that the battle had begun, they left the highway, and tried to ride round the right flank of the Chinese, and thus by a circuitous route to reach their own army. They made good progress, and were actually within half a mile of safety when a mandarin stopped them and said that, if they tried to advance through his position, he must fire upon them, but that he would take them to the Commander-in-Chief to secure a pass. Parkes said quickly, "I will go if Loch will accompany me." A Sikh, Nalsing, was carrying a handkerchief on a spear-head as a flag of truce; Loch called him to go too, and with a hearty good-bye and a cry, "We shall soon be back," he and Parkes rode off with the Chinese officer, leaving the little group to wait for them.

"I shall never forget," says Loch, in his striking narrative of these events, "my last view of that party. The Sikhs were leaning forward on their horses to ease their breathing, and to watch what was passing; Anderson, Brabazon, and De Normann were talking together in a group; while Bowlby, about a horse's length distant, looked exhausted and anxious, and was drawing his revolver from its case. He had often











expressed a wish to see how the Chinese could really fight, and as I passed him I said, 'I think, Bowlby, you'll soon have your wish fulfilled.'"

The leaders in that little group were never seen alive again by Europeans. Soon the party was surrounded by hosts of Chinese, and rudely hurried back to Tung-chow, thence to Peking, to the Emperor's Summer Palace, to torture, and, for most of them, to final death. Brabazon's fate was never clearly known, but it was believed that he was beheaded by order of a Chinese general, in revenge for a wound received in the fighting. Bowlby, Anderson, and De Normann all died after terrible suffering from the awful treatment which the Chinese inflicted upon them. They were kicked upon the head with boots, stamped upon, beaten, starved, and bound with cords moistened so as to make them shrink, and thus cause greater suffering. When Anderson called upon his men to help him by biting the cords, the Chinese kicked them away. For three days they were kept lying upon their stomachs with hands and feet tied behind their backs. They were loaded with chains and confined in cages like wild beasts. Bowlby, a fine spirit, to whom Lord Elgin had become much attached, died first. Anderson's fingers burst from the tightness of the cords before he died, and De Normann seems to have been the last of the three to expire; only a few of the soldiers survived to tell the tale.

Meanwhile Parkes and Loch were taken to



the Commander-in-Chief, Sangkolinsin, whom they met riding along the Chinese lines with a numerous staff. At once Parkes addressed him, and requested a pass for the party through the Chinese army. To this the General's answer was a torrent of abuse ; the two Englishmen were half knocked, half pulled, from their horses, they were cuffed, Loch's face was rubbed in the dirt, and quickly they were dragged to Sangkolinsin and forced to their knees before him, while he stormed, and demanded that Parkes should at once send to stop the battle. With great coolness Parkes laughed and said the demand was absurd ; that he had no power to give such an order. Sangkolinsin told him he lied, and said it was time to teach foreigners respect for Chinese nobles and ministers. Perhaps the end might have come then had not an officer galloped up to ask for the General's presence at the front. When he rode away other Chinese officers told the Englishmen that they had gone too far, and now they would get their deserts ; and, in accordance with Sangkolinsin's instructions, they were put into a rough cart, drawn by four mules, and sent to the Prince of I. They found in the cart, to their surprise, two French soldiers. At a sharp trot they went back to Tung-chow, where they learned that the Prince of I had returned to Peking. Since it was not easy to find him, they were taken to Jinlin, another high official, who was encamped near Peking. He kept the prisoners



kneeling before him while he asked innumerable questions, and the attendants from time to time twisted the Englishmen's arms behind them and pulled their hair and beards, until, to end the agony, Parkes fell over in a pretended faint.

Obviously, among the Chinese, counsels were divided as to the treatment of the prisoners. Though Parkes expected to be beheaded at once, they were soon again in the cart, galloping on roads formed of huge paving stones two or three feet square and separated by great ruts. Bumping over them in a springless cart caused intense agony, as the prisoners were bound and could not ease the motion with their hands or legs. Sometimes they were knocked almost senseless, and mandarins riding close to the cart laughed at their sufferings, which were aggravated by raging thirst due to the great heat. When they reached the suburbs of Pekin, curious crowds watched their progress, and the Tartar soldiers paraded their prisoners as the first instalment of the whole allied army which should soon be in like case. Nalsing, the old Sikh soldier who was with them, showed cool courage. When Loch told him not to fear, he said, "Ah, sahib, I do not fear. . . . If I do not die to-day I may die to-morrow, and I am with you ; I do not fear." The endurance of the party was soon to have a supreme test. As they entered a courtyard, Parkes read some Chinese characters on a light. "We are in the worst prison in China," he said. "We are in the



hands of the torturers. This is the Board of Punishments."

Lord Elgin had seen Loch, Parkes, and their party go forward into the heart of the Chinese position without misgivings as to their safety. The practice was not unusual, and hitherto the Chinese had respected flags of truce. But when Parkes sent back from Tung-chow a messenger to tell of the difficulties raised as to an audience with the emperor, Lord Elgin's questionings began, and when, at noon of the day of the seizure, he heard, in his quarters at Ho-see-woo, firing at the front, he grew very uneasy. Later in the afternoon Baron Gros's secretary, who had also gone to Tung-chow, returned, having ridden unharmed through the Chinese army, and he reported that he met Parkes riding back to see the Prince of I. Parkes had then said that Loch was with the General. "I wonder he is not come to inform me of what has happened," wrote Lord Elgin, at 5 p.m. Late that night he received the double information that his emissaries were captives, and that the Chinese had been defeated in the battle of the afternoon of the 18th.

Upon him now lay the responsibility of action, and for the following weeks he bore, as he said, "a great load of anxiety." Though by an accident of circumstance the Chinese had not seized members of the French Embassy in Tung-chow, other Frenchmen had been captured, and the two ambassadors moved in concert. All



British and French subjects were ordered to return at once to their head-quarters, and as preliminary to any further negotiations, demands were made for the unconditional return of the captives. By threatening death to them, the Chinese imagined they could force better terms from Lord Elgin; and the thought itself shows the limits of their outlook and intelligence. Lord Elgin saw, what any calm onlooker could see, that to bargain for the return of the captives was not to lessen the danger to them, as, should he refuse impossible demands, their lives would still be in peril. Besides, to buy their liberty would create permanent future menace to the safety of every European in China. So he met the Chinese with the resolute threat that the captives must be returned, or Peking would be bombarded and taken. It was not an empty menace, and some of the Chinese well knew how readily the foreign force could do what was threatened. But while the captives were seized on September 18, the Chinese made no final concession until three weeks later, on October 8.

The Chinese army was really only a number of fragments without any effective leadership, and, as Lord Elgin saw with vexed impatience, a small force thrown forward swiftly and boldly could soon have brought Peking to terms. From day to day letters passed between him and the Chinese Government. The Emperor named his brother, Prince Kung, to treat with the invaders; but to



every effort of the Prince to secure the retirement of the army, before handing over the captives, Lord Elgin's answer was unswerving, and with the delay his demands increased. He could hardly believe that any real harm would be done the prisoners. Prince Kung stated that they were all perfectly safe, and lodged comfortably in a public building, and it is quite likely that the Prince was ignorant of their real fate. They had received only the normal treatment for the lower class of criminals in Chinese prisons, with the difference that Englishmen were supposed to be stronger than Chinamen and able therefore to bear more; that they would die under the torture of their treatment was hardly suspected. On October 3 the Chinese sent in letters signed under compulsion by Loch and Parkes, and requesting easier terms for their captors. Nothing was conceded, and by October 5 the armies had advanced within sight of the gates of Peking; by the 6th Lord Elgin was lodged in the suburbs of that city. The Chinese army, after a show of resistance, retired; hardly a shot was fired, and Peking was at Lord Elgin's mercy.

Then the allies made a capture that showed the Chinese what Peking must soon expect, and brought them to their senses. On the northern outskirts of Peking lay the great park known as Yuen-ming-yuen, with its many palaces nestling among trees and lakes. This "Summer Palace" was the favourite residence of the Chinese



emperors. Here a British Embassy under Lord Macartney, sent out by George III., had been received. Here, too, a later British ambassador, Lord Amherst, had been insulted and hurried away because he would not perform the degrading "kow-tow" to the Emperor. The palace had played an important part in the history of China. In it were preserved the tablets of the dynasty, and in popular opinion the safety of the ruling house depended upon the security of these records. From being the almost constant residence of the Emperor, the palace had acquired for the Chinese a sacred character. Here the nobles and princes of the Empire assembled for the great receptions and festivities of the court; here centred both the serious business and the diversions of the Imperial house. It was a spacious home for even an emperor. Its gardens were famous throughout China, and great sums were spent annually in keeping them up. The vast park, containing more than fifty square miles, was dotted with groups of magnificent trees, among which herds of deer tossed their antlered heads. There were shaded walks, the favourite resort of the Emperor and his Court; there were lakes and ponds, noble terraces, and in all about two hundred buildings within the enclosure. Though some of them were slight enough, the Emperor's dwelling-place was magnificent. "It is impossible," wrote the French Commander, General Montauban, "to describe . . . the wonders of this Imperial



habitation. Nothing in Europe can convey an idea of such luxury." The reception-hall, with its beautiful carved throne, was paved with marble and brilliantly decorated in gold, azure, and scarlet; even the Emperor's washstand basin and ewer were of gold, studded with jewels. The palace was a museum for rare articles. In addition to a vast collection of native products, were Sèvres china and beautiful paintings sent out by Louis XIV., the state-coach sent as a present to the Emperor by George III., and, perhaps most interesting of all, two 12-pounder howitzers fully equipped, a present also from George III., which had been stored in the palace for more than a century, and which the Chinese in their self-complacency had made no effort to imitate for the equipment of their own army.

On Saturday, October 6, French and English cavalry, reconnoitring at the north of the city, found the palace practically deserted by the frightened Court, and promptly occupied it. The capture proved not only a blow to Chinese pride, but a serious national loss. The treachery of the Chinese had aroused the passions of the soldiery; the French in particular made hardly any attempt to check ruthless pillaging, and the interior of the palace was soon a wreck. There were storerooms full of wardrobes of silk and other rich fabrics of every kind that China could produce, and among these treasures a rude soldiery was turned loose to work its will. They threw away silver



to take up gold: they threw away gold to seize jewels. Soldiers went through some of the rooms breaking what they could, in revenge, as they said, for the seizure of the prisoners. Expensive fabrics were tossed upon the ground and trampled underfoot; beautiful clocks and costly vases were smashed to fragments; and among the *débris* whined the little Japanese dogs of the ladies of the court, who had fled from the desolation. The plunderers ransacked the Imperial archives, and strewed their contents on the floor; among them were picked up the English copy of the treaty signed by Lord Elgin at Tientsin, and letters of Sangkolinsin asserting his ability easily to surround and destroy the allies, of whose strength and numbers he declared himself perfectly aware. Never was there more ruthless pillage, and when Lord Elgin reached the Summer Palace on the day after the capture (Sunday) he was appalled by the desolation. "There was not," he wrote, "a room that I saw in which half the things had not been taken away or broken to pieces. . . . Plundering and devastating a place like this is bad enough, but what is much worse is the waste and breakage. Out of £1,000,000 worth of property I dare say £50,000 will not be realized. French soldiers were destroying in every way the most beautiful silks, breaking the jade ornaments and porcelain." For this destruction he blamed chiefly the French, whose General allowed it to go on unchecked, while



the British officers had stopped their men whenever possible.\*

Though the war-party still breathed defiance, this capture of the Summer Palace brought the Chinese to terms. Sometime before the capture the Emperor Hien-fung fled northward to the

\* "I conducted Sir Hope Grant and Lord Elgin to the palace in the course of the day. What a sight it presented! General Montauban met Sir Hope at the door and begged him not to allow his staff to enter, and he at once assenting, told us to stay outside. I was amused at this, because at that very moment there was a string of French soldiers going in empty-handed and another coming out laden with loot of all sorts and kinds. Many were dressed in the richly embroidered gowns of women, and almost all wore fine Chinese hats instead of the French képi. Sir Hope and Lord Elgin went in. Whilst I remained outside the French "assembly" was beaten on their drums in one of the regimental camps pitched at the gate. But it was sounded in vain; very few men, not ten per company, turned out; the others were doubtless looting inside the palace. For a considerable time I walked up and down with the French General, Baron Janin. He was an interesting man, and I was much amused to see how large a number of the looters presented him with a gift of something curious as they saluted him in passing out of the palace gates. Many of the looters had well-filled sacks on their backs. One of these, an artilleryman, having made his offering to the General, turned towards me and said, as he handed to me what at first sight seemed to be a tiny framed picture, '*Mon camarade, voici un petit cadeau pour vous.*' I thanked him, and put it into my pocket. It was an extremely good French enamel of a man in a flowing wig, evidently one of the many fine presents sent by Louis XIV. to the Emperor of China with the imposing embassy he despatched to the Chinese Court. For years it remained in its little Chinese frame standing on my writing-table. About ten years afterwards, when I had married, my wife looking at it, said she believed it was by Petitot, and sent it to Paris to have it examined. She was right. It was a miniature of Boileau, done by that artist in his best style. It is the only piece of loot I possess, but it is a valuable one."—Field-Marshal Viscount Wolseley "The Story of a Soldier's Life," vol. ii. pp. 77, 78.



Imperial residence at Jehol : an official despatch said he was obliged by law to hunt in the autumn, so he had to go away, and could not meet Lord Elgin ; and in this way China gained the point she insisted upon so urgently that the Emperor would not grant a personal interview. Gossip said he soon occupied himself with heavy drinking and by adding a fourth to the number of his wives. His absence greatly distracted the counsels of the Government ; the dynasty itself was in danger. But when despatches passed between the belligerents Prince Kung, who acted for the Emperor, had said repeatedly that China could not yield until the allied army fell back. Lord Elgin had refused any concession until the captives were released, and his tone grew steadily more menacing. At last he gave the Chinese three days to yield on penalty of an assault of the capital. But even then the haughty Oriental could not bring himself to accept the barbarian's terms, and on September 30 Lord Elgin wrote to Prince Kung, saying that the matter was now in the hands of the military authorities. When the capture of the Summer Palace followed in a week, at last the Chinese leaders saw that Lord Elgin's demands must be granted. As the first step towards settlement, on October 8 Parkes and Loch were liberated—an event that brought to their chief emotions of “heart-felt gratitude,” as he wrote to Lord John Russell.



What had happened meanwhile to the prisoners is instructive as to Chinese methods. There was great excitement in the Chinese crowd when Parkes and Loch had arrived at the Board of Punishments; the prisoners were taken to a room decorated with instruments of torture, and, after being loaded with chains, were separated. Parkes, thrust in among seventy or eighty wild-looking men, loathsome from disease and dirt, was so exhausted that he fell asleep almost at once on the raised boarding where he was chained. But in the middle of the night he was aroused and carried before the Board of Inquisitors. Forced to his knees before these mandarins, he was warned that he would be compelled to tell the truth, and in proof of this assertion, before one question was asked, four torturers seized him by the head and began to pull his ears and his hair. Parkes's account shows his own cool courage, and also the attitude of mind of his inquisitors—

“They first asked me if I were a Chinese. I told them they had only to look at my face and hair to see that I was not. The next question related to my age, length of residence in China, how and where I had been employed, etc. They then proceeded as follows :—

“*Inquisitors.* State the name of your head man.

“*Answer.* Which do you mean, the Ambassador, General, or Admiral?



"*Inquisitors* (angrily). You have no such functionaries. Don't presume to use such titles.

"Here the torturers suited their action to the tone of the mandarins, by pulling simultaneously at my hair, ears, etc.

"*Inquisitors*. Now give the name of your head man.

"*Answer*. Which one?

"*Inquisitors*. The head of your soldiers.

"*Answer* (in English). Lieutenant-General Sir Hope Grant.

"*Inquisitors*. Say something that we can understand.

"*Answer*. I am obliged to use the English terms as you will not let me give you these in Chinese.

"They attempted to write down in Chinese sounds, 'Lieutenant-General Sir Hope Grant,' but, not succeeding, they asked me the name of another head man.

"*Answer* (in English). Ambassador Extraordinary, the Earl of Elgin.

"Finding it equally impossible to write this down in Chinese or to get on with the examination, they told me I might revert to Chinese names and titles, and I then gave them those of the Ambassador and the Commander-in-Chief.

"*Inquisitors*. How many soldiers have you?

"*Answer*. Not less than 20,000 fighting men.

"*Inquisitors*. That is false. (Torturers clutched me as before.) Repeat how many.

"*Answer*. Not less than 20,000 fighting men, in which I do not include followers, etc. I have stated that once to you, and I have no other answer to give.



"Here I was again threatened, both by mandarins and torturers, but . . . I adhered to what I had already given them, and it was taken down.

"*Inquisitors.* How many soldiers have the French?

"*Answer.* I am less acquainted with their force, but they cannot have less than 10,000 fighting men.

"*Inquisitors.* You are lying again.

"Then followed a long examination on things in general.

"They were much displeased," Parkes continues, "with my statement that . . . [India] was within twenty days' sail of China, and had an army of upwards of 300,000 men, and a population of more than 100,000,000. . . . But the remark which probably gave them most displeasure, and caused me some pain at the hand of the torturers, was the use on my part of a term for Her Majesty denoting equality of rank with the Emperor. . . . 'What do you mean by using such language?' they said. 'You have yourself shown that you have long been in China, that you can speak our language and read our books, and you must know therefore that there is but one Emperor, who rules over all lands.'"

When the long examination was ended, Parkes, still in chains, was ordered back to prison, where he found himself entered as a "rebel."

Meanwhile Loch had been led through successive courts at last to a door, upon which his



gaolers struck heavily three times. "A most unearthly yell from the inside was the reply ; the door was thrown open, and I found myself in the presence of, and surrounded by, as savage a lot of half-naked demons as I had ever beheld ; they were nearly all the lowest class of criminals, imprisoned for murder and the most serious offences." But at their hands he suffered no indignity. They looked at him curiously, and in the end treated him with great kindness ; in the chill of the night, when he lay shivering on a bench, a prisoner threw over him his own tattered rug, and himself lay uncovered. At daylight, when his fellow-captives crowded familiarly round him, his knowledge of Oriental character led him to demand respect. He could not speak Chinese, but he showed signs of displeasure, and gently pushed them away and made motions that they should remain at a respectful distance. They obeyed in silent amazement ; from that time he was treated with deference. It is to the credit of human nature that whenever these half-starving prisoners received presents of food from friends outside, they invariably offered a portion to Loch. Three prisoners, two of whom were murderers, and the third was in prison for biting off his father's finger, were told off to look after him. They helped him by carrying his chains ; they brought water for him to wash and performed other services, all with the most cheerful goodwill. Those who had means were allowed a remission of sentence



by providing food for the other prisoners; a condemned thief paid for Loch. Among the prisoners kindly feeling prevailed; they rarely quarrelled, and the well-provided readily shared their food with the needy.

Grim as is the tale, Loch's account of the horrors of a Chinese prison should be repeated, for, in large degree, they remain unchanged to this day. He noticed that every morning and night his attendants carefully washed his neck and wrists, where the ropes and irons had galled the skin. Soon he found the reason—

“There is a small maggot which appears to infect all Chinese prisons; the earth at the depth of a few inches swarms with them; they are the scourge most dreaded by every poor prisoner. Few enter a Chinese gaol who have not on their bodies or limbs some wounds . . .; the instinct of the insect to which I allude appears to lead them direct to these wounds. Bound and helpless, the poor wretch cannot save himself from their approach, although he knows full well that if they once succeed in reaching his lacerated skin there is the certainty of a fearful, lingering, and agonizing death before him. My right-hand neighbour on the bench, where we all slept at night, was dying from the inroads of these insects; his suffering was great, and the relief his fellow-prisoners could afford was of no avail. The crowded state of the gaol brought me in such close contact at night with this poor fellow, that our heads rested on the same block of wood not a foot apart. The thought, as I lay pinioned and



ironed, unable to move during the long, dark nights, that his fate at any moment might be my own, was at times difficult to bear with calmness and with that outward appearance of indifference which it was necessary I should maintain."

Loch's treatment was apparently that ordinarily meted out to grave offenders. Mandarin came repeatedly to question him, with an accompaniment of kicks and cuffs. He longed to know what had become of Parkes, and once tried to learn if he was within earshot by beginning to sing "God save the Queen," but his heart failed him; he could not go beyond the first notes. Parkes, he afterwards learned, had tried the same thing with a like result.

For ten days this life lasted, and all the while the allies were closing in on Peking. But on the 29th came a dramatic change. Hang-ki, one of the commissioners, whom Parkes and Loch had met at Tung-chow as equals, arrived at the prison, and, amidst much excitement on the part of the prisoners, ordered the removal of Loch's chains. One is pleased to know that before leaving the prison Loch insisted on keeping the great man waiting while he said farewell to each of his fellow-captives in turn. To his joy he now rejoined Parkes; "that moment," he says, "repaid me for much suffering." They were removed to luxurious quarters, and the dinner which they had that day, consisting of some fifty dishes, stood in vivid contrast with their recent fare, but they could hardly



touch it. The aim of the Chinese was now to get them to unite in a letter requesting easier terms from Lord Elgin. Though they signed the letter, Parkes at the same time told the Chinese that the only thing to save Pekin was to yield to Lord Elgin's demands ; Hang-ki's reply was that the two Englishmen's heads would fall at the first shot fired at Pekin. Day after day things drifted in this way. While the Chinese could not bring themselves to yield, Lord Elgin's demands steadily increased, and at length he required that one of the gates of Pekin should be surrendered to and held by the allies until the terms of peace were finally ratified. On October 5, when this demand was laid before the Chinese Imperial Council, of which, in the Emperor's absence, Prince Kung was the head, there was a stormy debate ; when it was ended Hang-ki visited Parkes and Loch, and with emotion told them that his own counsels for peace had failed, that China had decided upon war to the knife, and that they were to be executed that evening.

Loch says that the prospect of certain death, long-threatened, was rather a relief. The captives wrote farewell letters to friends, which the Chinese promised to forward ; but when Hang-ki came again it was to say that, at his entreaty, the Council had postponed the execution in the hope of a favourable answer to a new letter to Lord Elgin. Hang-ki, a really strong man, knew what the allied army could do, and was working



for the liberation of the prisoners, not in their interests, but in those of Peking, where he was a large property-holder. Just when Loch's and Parkes's death had been decided upon, the allies had struck new terror into Chinese hearts by taking and sacking the Summer Palace, and this event made concession inevitable. Early on Monday, October 8, Hang-ki came to say that he had persuaded Prince Kung to order, on his own authority, the release of the prisoners; at two o'clock on that day they were put into carts and taken with a strong escort to one of the western gates of the city. Peking was now thoroughly alarmed. The streets were deserted, and the shops closed on the day of the prisoners' release; and the trembling populace lived in dread of the bombardment which seemed imminent. Afraid to approach the British lines, the escort turned back at the city gate, and the released men found their own way to the temple occupied by Lord Elgin and Sir Hope Grant. A sequel of the story is interesting. When Hang-ki persuaded Prince Kung, now well frightened by the capture of the Summer Palace, to release Loch and Parkes, both leaders had learned through their own spies that a courier from the Emperor was on his way to Peking to order the immediate execution of the captives. Within fifteen minutes after Loch and Parkes had passed out of the gates of their prison, the courier arrived. This was on the 8th. On the 12th, surviving soldiers



were returned to the allies, and on the 14th the Chinese sent to the British camp some of the bodies of the dead. The claim of the Chinese was that the prisoners had died either from wounds received in battle, or from unavoidable disease, and to conceal the cause of death the bodies had been thrown into quicklime, and were now eaten away almost beyond recognition. Only in presence of these grim facts did Lord Elgin fully understand the horror of what happened. "We have dreadful news," he writes on October 14, "respecting the fate of some of our captured friends. It is an atrocious crime, and, not for vengeance, but for future security, ought to be severely dealt with."

A sorrowful funeral was one duty to the dead. General Ignatieff offered the Russian cemetery for the purpose, and on October 17, with every mark of respect from the allied armies, a long procession moved slowly across the plain to the burial ground just outside of Peking, Lord Elgin and Sir Hope Grant acting as chief mourners, and Parkes and Loch walking one on each side of the coffin of De Normann, who, like themselves, belonged to the diplomatic service. Anglican and Roman and Greek clergy in their robes of office stood side by side at the one grave in which all the victims were buried. Another duty was to punish the murderers. Swift and unmistakable punishment of the Emperor was necessary—of the Emperor, for he had been a party to the



seizure of the prisoners : they had been taken directly to his Summer Palace and tortured ; their horses and some of their accoutrements were found in his stables. To exact a money fine would mean only further taxes for the helpless people ; if the lives of those responsible for the murders were demanded, the Chinese Court would lay the blame upon probably innocent subordinates. So a unique punishment was resolved upon. Lord Elgin issued a proclamation in Chinese, declaring that he was determined to punish the Emperor himself, and that the favourite Imperial residence, the Summer Palace, already plundered, would now be burned. On the plea that it was unwise further to humble the Chinese Court, and possibly to imperil the dynasty, the French did not approve of this step ; but Lord Elgin's stern resolution was carried out promptly. On the morning of October 18 the Palace was set on fire ; for two days the smoke, as Loch says, "hung like a vast black pall over Pekin." Less than might have been supposed was the destruction, for many of the buildings were slight wooden structures. The perishable furnishings of the rooms had already been carried off by the pillagers ; great marbles and bronzes remote from the buildings were not destroyed, and, of what masonry there was, much proved not combustible. But the Emperor's punishment was certainly proclaimed far enough ; and the effect of Lord Elgin's firmness was at once apparent. On the 20th Prince



Kung submitted unreservedly to the demands of the allies, and the Chinese, formerly full of procrastination, were now eager to have the business settled as quickly as possible.

Occasionally time brings swift revenges. The allies were now masters of Peking, and on October 21, Loch and Parkes, two weeks before captives under sentence of death, rode into the city with a strong escort to arrange for Lord Elgin's reception. Never was there a more sordid spectacle than the streets of the capital, so long veiled from the outer world as if it had some treasure to conceal. Filth, squalor, indecency met the eye everywhere; the crowded streets were lined for miles with mere hovels, and there was an intolerable stench from the muddy roads, often little better than open latrines. Even the better buildings were in a partially ruined state; when a Chinese structure is once put up, it is usually left to take care of itself. Truly, when this miserable capital was bared to view, the crouching lion that had been pictured proved, as was said at the time, to be only stuffed and moth-eaten. The presence of the Englishmen and their escorts in the streets of Peking caused excitement, but not alarm. They selected the great Hall of Ceremonies as the place for the final completion of the Treaty; but as they still required a residence for Lord Elgin, and saw in the distance the roof of a building which they were told was the Palace of the Prince of I, the Commissioner principally



concerned in their imprisonment, they left their escort and, with a single Sikh to hold their horses, rode on rapidly the three-quarters of a mile to inspect the great palace. The vast structure, capable of holding three thousand people, was in a half-ruined condition, and apparently deserted. They dismounted, and, walking through court after court, came finally to one full of mandarins. On seeing them, Parkes said excitedly, "Do you recollect that man?" It was the President of the Board of Punishments, who had been particularly brutal in his conduct to the two English prisoners. Parkes at once addressed the mandarins in Chinese, and told them that the offending mandarin was a disgrace to their country. They looked angry, and it was not unlikely that the two Englishmen, alone, and, for the moment, remote from succour, might have fared badly had not Parkes quickly turned to praise, for his fairness and courtesy, another of the mandarins whom he recognized. This produced smiles from all but the President of the Board of Punishments, and Parkes and Loch went their way. A week later Lord Elgin took up his residence in the Prince of I's Palace.

But before that date he had secured the final and formal ratification of the Treaty. In addition to carrying out the terms made at Tientsin, China was to pay £100,000 to the families of the victims of her treachery, besides an indemnity of 8,000,000 taels to Great Britain, and a grant of a small



addition to the Hong Kong Territory. On October 24 there was an imposing ceremony in Pekin. In great state, with bands playing, and with an immense military escort, Lord Elgin proceeded to the Hall of Ceremonies. The three miles of the streets of Pekin through which he passed were guarded by British soldiers, and the chief desire of the crowds of Chinese along the route was to see the man who had ventured to punish even their Emperor. As Lord Elgin's chair entered the Hall of Ceremonies, the band burst out with "God save the Queen." He advanced through the hall to the seats prepared, and with a stern manner and by a cold bow motioned to Prince Kung to take the seat at his right hand, which, in China, is not the place of honour. The powers of the two representatives were elaborately exchanged, the Convention was signed with all due formality, and then the Treaties were handed over completed to each side. With eager eyes the mandarins watched every word and movement of their conqueror. His manner to the young scion of the Imperial house was rather that of one who confers than of one who receives a favour. Prince Kung was a typical Oriental, reared in the narrow traditions of the Imperial house ; his confession that he had hitherto thought Great Britain a small island, so densely inhabited that one half the population had to live in ships, illustrates his outlook. Lord Elgin gave him and the mandarins to understand that



the breach of faith was not forgotten, and that its memory could be undone only by future regard for treaty obligations. Thus ended three years of tortuous war and diplomacy, by bringing China at last into more direct touch with Europe.

At once Loch left for England with the Treaty, but Lord Elgin remained for some days in Peking, to establish the precedent of a British minister's residence there, and the event was all the more impressive from his living in the Palace of the Prince of I, who had played him false at Tung-chow. "There is a good deal of aristocratic seclusion about the place," writes Lord Elgin, "as it is surrounded by walls, and entirely cut off from the world without." But it was not a model of comfort. Obligated to stay in bed for a few days with an attack of influenza, he found paper windows, which were not transparent, something less than cheerful on a rainy day. By the Emperor's order the Treaty had been posted on the walls of Peking, and crowds gathered in wonder at the Imperial condescension in thus treating with foreigners. The French had secured their treaty too, and they indulged the Gallic instinct for dramatic effect by holding a gorgeous funeral for their countrymen who had lost their lives. "I could not attend," says Lord Elgin, "being in bed at the time. Several speeches in bad taste were delivered, and a remarkable series of performances took place. . . . The incident which created the most sensation was when our general



[Hope Grant, a very ardent Protestant] was presented with the —— (I forget the name of the implement) to sprinkle holy water over the graves. He could not refuse, but the look of horror with which he performed the office was, I am told, very striking. On the day following, they inaugurated the old Jesuit Cathedral, which they have recovered from the Chinese Government, and the bishop who preached, in order to make amends for the omission of all reference to us at the ceremony of the funeral, complimented Queen Victoria and her *digne représentant* for having come to China to set up the Roman Cathedral in Pekin. This reflection will comfort Spooner [a Protestant M.P. of the time] when he comes to vote next year the balance of the £10,000,000 spent."

While England and France, the two participants in the war, gained from it freer intercourse with China, Russia reaped the chief profit. Better than any other European power the Russians understood China, and they were astonished that the allies let the Chinese off so easily. A Russian mission had long been established at Pekin, but, for safety, its members had worn the Chinese dress. Even this, it seemed, would hardly protect them when a European army was marching upon the capital, and accordingly the Russian representative, General Ignatieff, withdrew at that time. To him the allied generals owed much useful information in regard to the best route by



which to approach Peking. He returned with them, and was soon busy with his diplomacy. "I dined . . . with the Russian Minister," says Lord Elgin, "who was very hospitable. He made all my escort drunk, and it was not for want of encouragement if I was not the same." His efforts and those of his countrymen to reap something from China's trouble were crowned with marked success. The Russian Governor of Eastern Siberia, General Muravieff, persuaded the suspicious Chinese that Russia would be their protector against the Western aggressor. To him China yielded concessions that made the Amur a Russian river, and ensured to Russia the territory in which she established her great fortress of Vladivostock. In the commercial concessions made to other powers, Russia shared equally. Britain gained no special advantages. As Lord Elgin well knew, when he secured privileges for British trade, he also secured them for the other trading nations. And the odium of the punishment of China fell upon the British. It was they who had destroyed the Summer Palace; the French would have saved it. "France has already," said a Russian newspaper, "obtained a much firmer footing in China than England has, or ever will have, in India."

After these events of 1860 the chief Western states in turn established legations at Peking. All the world knows how, in 1900, just forty years after Lord Elgin's mission, a persistent effort was



made by malcontents in China, with the sanction of the Chinese Government, to destroy the hundreds of Europeans in these legations. It was the treachery of 1860, repeated on a gigantic scale, and it might well seem as if China had learned nothing in the interval. But, in fact, owing to the events of 1860, China has profoundly, if slowly, changed. She hates, as every other nation hates, dictation by the foreigner, but by 1898 even an Emperor of China had come to see that China must adjust herself to new standards. In that year China's young ruler issued a decree saying that the Chinese desire to stick to the old ways was "empty, vain, and impracticable;" he urged his people to break with the past, and to adopt the educational methods of Europe. It is true that the bloody reaction of the "Boxer" movement followed, and that the reforming Emperor was, in effect, deposed. But his decrees show that the heaven is working, and a new China, taught the need of change by the disasters of the old China, may yet emerge from the contact with Europe, which Lord Elgin had so much to do in making inevitable.

In due time Mr. Bruce arrived at Peking, and on November 8 Lord Elgin formally handed over to him the duty of carrying on intercourse with the Chinese Government, as a regularly accredited Minister. For the present, Mr. Bruce was to return to Tientsin, and when Lord Elgin set out on the homeward journey, only Mr. Adkin, one



of the interpreters attached to the Embassy, remained to represent Great Britain in the Chinese capital. When these matters had been arranged, it was time to be gone. So late was the season that the voyage down the Peiho was partly obstructed by ice. At the mouth of the river, the warships received Lord Elgin on his arrival at night, with illuminations; as he weighed anchor in the *Ferooz* and passed out, both the English and the French ships manned yards and saluted. With every mark of honour he left that troubled scene.

At Shanghai there was some delay, for the rebels were so near as to be a source of annoyance to the British residents. During this enforced rest, Lord Elgin took long tramps, and he also read much. "As I have a comfortable room and no great interruptions, I get through a good deal of reading." Darwin's "Origin of Species," Mrs. Browning's "Aurora Leigh," and Trollope's "Dr. Thorn" were among the new books that he attacked during a quiet fortnight. By January 4 he was ready to depart. "Hurrah! I am off, with a fair wind," he writes. But he had to spend two weeks at Hong Kong, and only on January 21, 1861, did he bid a last adieu to the shores of China.

From the first Lord Elgin had been anxious to return home by a new route. "It is wearisome," he wrote, "passing over ground which I have travelled twice before. No interest of



novelty to relieve the mind. Penang and Ceylon are very lovely, but one cares little, I think, for revisiting scenes which owe all their charm to the beauties of external nature. It is different when such beauties are the setting, on which are deposited historical associations, and the memories of great deeds or events." He had planned to return home, if possible, by crossing the Pacific, or, failing this, to go by land across Siberia. But the difficulties were too great, and in the end he varied his route only by visiting the Philippines and Java. On the first mission to China, Oliphant had visited the Philippines, and his account of the islands no doubt helped to induce Lord Elgin to go thither when the opportunity offered.

At Manila Lord Elgin was received in elaborate Castilian style and magnificently lodged, but since, with fine Spanish disregard of the rest of the world, none of the high officials, neither Governor, Admiral, nor Archbishop, could speak a word of any modern language which he knew, his intercourse with them was purely formal. "We passed our time in looking at each other unutterable things." With much interest he surveyed the conditions in the colony, and he found something to admire in the Spanish system. "It is very curious," he says, "to see a state of things so different from ours. Such a number of troops; gens-d'armes on horseback; not a person meeting us (the Governor-General was with me), who did not take off



his hat. . . . They [rulers and natives] are not separated from each other by that unpassable barrier of mutual contempt, suspicion, and antipathy, which alienates us from the unhappy natives in those lands where we settle ourselves among inferior orders of men. . . . One feels a little softened and sublimated when one passes from Hong-kong, where the devil is worshipped in his naked deformity, to this place, where he displays at least some of the feathers which he wore before he fell. . . . I fancy the monks have won over the simple Indians here to a great extent by gentle methods. They protect them and manage their affairs, and know all their secrets through the confessional, and amuse them with no end of feast-days, and gew-gaws, and puerile ceremonies. The natives seem to have a great deal of our dear old French Canadian *habitans* about them, only in a more sublime stage of infantine simplicity. . . . I never saw a more cheerful-looking rural population. All nicely and modestly dressed. The women completely emancipated from all Eastern seclusion. I visited . . . another great cigar factory; 8000 girls employed. . . . A skilful worker can make 200 a day, so that these young ladies can poison mankind to the tune of 1,600,000 cigars a day."

Students of Spanish civil and ecclesiastical rule in the Philippines will admit that Lord Elgin's estimate is not lacking in appreciation.



He continued his journey to Java, where he found a colony performing the marvel that no British colony ever performed of contributing large sums to the revenues of the mother country. In Java the Dutch made no attempt to educate or elevate the natives. Lord Elgin visited the interior, and saw something of the Javanese, "the most timorous of mankind. All, men and women, crouch on their heels or knees when our carriage approaches, and they do this, I believe, to all white people as well as to their own chiefs." The heat was great, and he was anxious to get on, so it was with some relief that he found the good ship *Ferooz* heading at last directly for home.

He left the *Ferooz* in the Gulf of Suez; in the Mediterranean the returning Ambassador was furnished with a warship, and he passed along the Greek coast in H.M.S. *Terrible*. The Ionian Islands were then under British protection, and he was delighted with a glimpse of Corfu. Journeying by Trieste and Vienna, he met Lady Elgin at Paris, and on April 11, 1861, a little more than a year after setting out, he was once more in Britain. Not only his private, but his public reception, was cordial. He had done well; the nation understood this, and he was much *fêted*. Cambridge conferred upon him an honorary degree, which he received in company with Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, Motley, and Grote. Speaking at the Royal



Academy dinner in the spring of 1861, he explained and justified his destruction "of that collection of summer-houses and kiosks, already, and previously to any act of mine, rifled of their contents, which was dignified by the title of Summer Palace," and General Sir Hope Grant, who was present, endorsed what he called "an act of retribution for an abominable murder." The feasting in London pleased Lord Elgin less than to settle down among his Scottish friends and neighbours at Dunfermline, where his rest, alas! was to be short-lived. In less than a month he was offered and accepted the difficult and, as it was to prove, fatal post of Viceroy of India.



## CHAPTER VII

### VICEROYALTY OF INDIA, 1862-63

WITH a heavy heart Lord Elgin took up the task of governing India. Although no one suspected it, probably his health was already undermined, and this may account in part for the sombre tone of his mind at this period. The striking fact has often been noted, that the three successive Viceroys of India, Lord Dalhousie, Lord Canning, and Lord Elgin, had been students together and personal friends at Christ Church, and to all alike the heavy labours of the viceroyalty were to prove fatal. To the friends who gathered at Dunfermline to say farewell, Lord Elgin in a parting speech expressed the fear that he might never return, and so it was to be. In January, 1862, he and Lady Elgin visited the Queen at Osborne. Overwhelmed as the Queen still was by the recent death of Prince Albert, it was fitting that she should say some parting words to Lord Elgin, since he was the first Viceroy appointed solely by the Crown, the political power of the East India Company having come to an end in 1858. At Malta on the way out he met a former private



secretary to Lord Hardinge, an earlier ruler of India, and writes ironically: "He gave me a glowing picture of my prospects, the badness of the climate of Calcutta, the utterly overwhelming amount of work, etc."

Lord Elgin was essentially a man of domestic temper, and it was hard to leave behind his young family. Lady Elgin, too, did not join him for nearly a year; her going out being delayed because the time of his arrival, the month of March, was the most deadly in the Calcutta climate. Had Lord Elgin consulted his own safety he would have deferred his journey to India for a few months. But Lord Canning was sinking under his heavy burden, and relief was necessary. So hard had Canning worked that sometimes he would spend the whole night at his desk. He took no relaxation or exercise. Lady Canning had shared his enormous labours, but her fresh-made grave at Barrackpore showed with what fatal results. Lord Elgin has been blamed for going to Calcutta at an inclement season. Surely Canning's need is a sufficient answer.

While steaming through the Red Sea he wrote of his own career: "I have been reading over some old manuscript books written from twenty to twenty-five years ago, and containing a record of my thoughts and doings at that remote time. It is very interesting and useful to look back. I was working very hard during



these years, searching after truth and right, with no positive occupation but that of managing the Broomhall affairs, and riding at a sort of single anchor with politics. Would it have been better for me if I had had more engrossing positive work? . . . Just twenty years ago, at this same season, I set out on my first visit to the Tropics. What a strange career it has been! How grateful I should be to Providence for the protection I have enjoyed! How wild it seems, to be about, at the close of twenty years, to begin again!"

On March 12, 1862, Lord Elgin arrived at Calcutta, where he was met and welcomed by Lord Canning. The two statesmen spent a week together, and then Canning left for home, broken in spirit by the loss of his wife, and soon to follow her to the grave. On arriving at Calcutta, and in mapping out his work, Lord Elgin planned to save the daylight hours for his duties, and "to have one large formal dinner a week, and three or four guests every other day." "I shall in this way," he wrote, "get acquainted with people, and suck their brains." When told this plan, Canning made the pathetic comment, "I was always so tired by dinner-time that I could not speak." Of course, the ruler who had guided India through the Mutiny could hardly know rest; but, even in quieter times, Lord Elgin found that the situation of the Governor-General made relaxation of mind almost impossible. At Calcutta he tried to take



exercise before the sun appeared "glowing and angry above the horizon," but soon found the dullness of this early promenade in pyjamas intolerable. It was a long and tiring day to dinner-time, when his guests appeared to be cross-questioned, and when, as he said, "if my bees have any honey in them, I extract it at the moment of the day when it is most gushing." Not unnaturally, his guests sometimes complained that he took more than he gave.

For eleven months Lord Elgin remained chiefly at Calcutta. In July arrived news of the death of the noble-hearted Canning—

"Mild, when the good felt wrath, calm when the brave had fears."

And soon came to Lord Elgin another and heavier stroke. His brother, General Robert Bruce, who was Governor of the then Prince of Wales, and had a large part in directing his education, had gone with the Prince on his trip to Palestine; there he contracted a fever, which killed him in the summer of 1862. To the elder brother the blow was overwhelming. "I have lost," he wrote, "a wise counsellor in difficulties; . . . one on whom, if anything had befallen myself, I could always have relied to care for those left behind me. It tells, too, of the dropping of a link of that family chain which had always been so strong and unbroken. . . . It is difficult to make plans, with such a breakdown of human hopes in possession of all my thoughts."



The excessive heat added to the natural depression at this time, and the long, laborious months at Calcutta were hardly cheerful. But when Lady Elgin and his daughter, Lady Louisa Bruce, joined him at the beginning of the year 1863 the outlook improved. By that time he had mastered the problems of his office sufficiently to have plans for the future. Lord Dalhousie had made great additions to British territory in India, and it was sometimes charged that his aggressive policy had brought on the Mutiny. Lord Canning's work was to crush the Mutiny and restore order, and now Lord Elgin's task was to do what a viceroy could in improving the administration and developing the resources of the country. Everywhere the Mutiny involved reorganization and readjustment. There were questions of education for the masses of the people, and, associated with these, problems of taxation. The judiciary required reform, so also did the administration of public works, cumbered with red tape to such an extent that of each shilling spent threepence represented the cost of supervision. New railways were to be built, difficult labour questions to be solved. The problems of India are not provincial, but continental; among them were the protection of great forest areas, and the colonizing of regions almost as barren of population as the wastes of North America. On the Afghan frontier and elsewhere in the North-West Provinces disputes with native tribes



might at any time involve the use of military force.

Since Lord Elgin ruled India for little more than a year and a half there was no time to develop the policy to which he was giving laborious thought, and little need be said about it here. In India or in China he sternly condemned wrongs done by his own countrymen. "My modest ambition for England," he wrote, "is that she should in this Eastern world establish the reputation of being all-just and all-powerful." His resolution to stand by the cause of justice was soon tried. The new penal code which came into effect in India at the beginning of 1862 Lord Elgin had to administer, and cases arose in which was revealed the yawning gulf between the European and the Asiatic. Writing to Sir Charles Wood, afterwards Lord Halifax, the Secretary of State for India, Lord Elgin states a case in which he was obliged to speak the last word. "A man of the name of Budd, a soldier who had obtained his discharge in order to accompany an officer of the name of —— to Australia, killed a native in the Punjâb some months ago under the following circumstances. He was desired by —— to procure a sheep for him. He went to a native, from whom he appears to have procured sheep before, and took one. The native protested against his taking this particular sheep, because it was with lamb, but said he might take any other from the flock.



Budd paid no heed to this remonstrance, put the sheep on the back of another native, and marched off. The owner followed, complaining and protesting. On this Budd first fired two barrels over his head, then threw stones at him, and finally went in the house, brought out another gun, fired at him, and killed him on the spot. Besides imploring that his sheep might be restored to him, it does not appear that the native did anything at all to provoke this proceeding."

Being a European, the man could not be tried on the spot by the ordinary tribunals, and, at the public expense, the witnesses were taken one thousand miles to Calcutta. After repeated delays the trial took place, and to their honour the jury found Budd guilty. He was sentenced to death. Since the murder was obviously not premeditated, strenuous efforts were made to have the sentence commuted. Lord Elgin went into the matter most carefully. The crime, he said, "was committed in wanton recklessness, almost without provocation, under an impulse which would have been resisted if the life of the victim had been estimated at the value of that of a dog." So he allowed the law to take its course; with one exception, it was the first instance of the execution of a European under British law at Calcutta.

On February 5, 1863, Lord Elgin, with his wife and daughter, left Calcutta to make a tour of India that should last about a year and a half.



There is in India some jealousy of the predominance of Calcutta's influence in the government, and partly to meet this, Lord Dalhousie, one of the most aggressive viceroys, had spent but little time at the capital. The Mutiny emphasized the importance of keeping in touch with all parts of the country, and it was Lord Elgin's intention to call meetings of his Legislative Council at other points than Calcutta, and in this way and by personal travel to disarm the suspicion that any part of India could command undue influence. It has now become established that while Calcutta remains the winter capital, there is a second capital, Simla, to which the Government migrates in the summer.

Lord Elgin's long journey, ending at Simla in April, was, in fact, a vice-regal progress. First of India's Viceroys, he went by rail all the way from Calcutta to Benares over a line just opened, and he spoke at a great dinner in celebration of the event. Thence he proceeded to Cawnpore, indelibly associated with the saddest tragedy in all the troubled history of India. Lord Canning had taken a deep interest in the plan to consecrate as a Christian burial-place a plot of ground that included the terrible well at Cawnpore into which had been thrown the mangled bodies of the women and children so ruthlessly massacred. On February 11, Lord Elgin was present at the simple ceremony of consecration by Bishop George Cotton; the impressive words on the

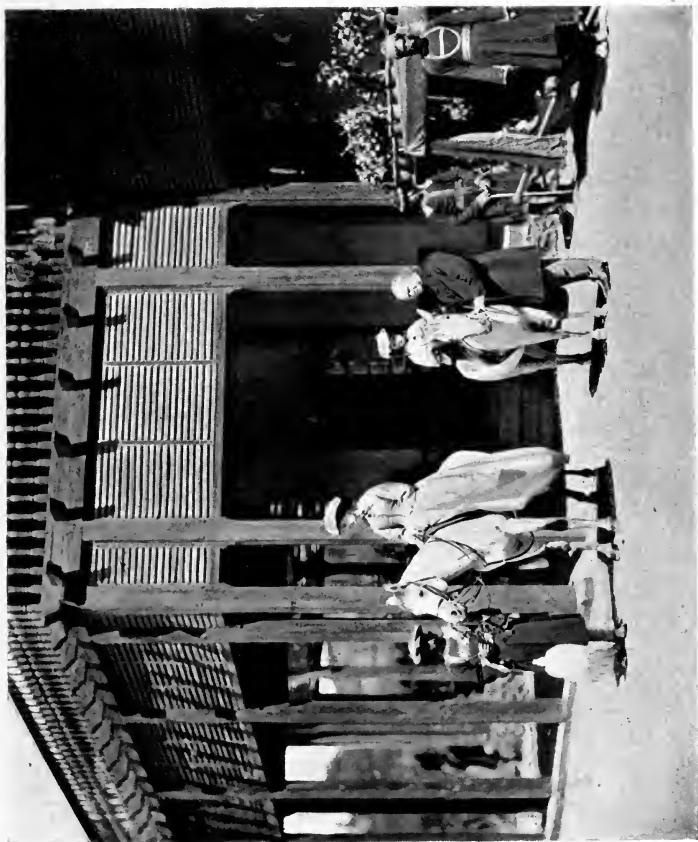


monument, also consecrated at the time, were a sermon in themselves: "These are they which came out of great tribulation."

At Agra, Lord Elgin spent six pleasant days, delighted most of all by its marvel of architecture, the Taj, the most beautiful tomb in the world. At Agra, too, he held an imposing durbar, where amidst a motley and truly Oriental assembly of princes, he made a speech indicating the policy of his Government. From Agra the railway was no longer available, but now he was escorted by a proud array, surpassing that of a Roman conqueror at his triumph. No less than 10,000 men were in his train, and at last, after visiting Delhi, Umballa, and other important places, he reached his summer home at Simla, "the paradise of Anglo-Indians," far up in the mountains, with snow-clad peaks towering over it. The great altitude did not really suit him; his heart was weak, and the rarefied air aggravated his malady.

At Simla Lord Elgin received another cruel blow. In June his third son, a child of ten, died in Scotland, and this haunting grief was much in his mind until his own end. In the autumn he set out on a journey which hitherto no Viceroy had taken. He wished to visit in person what was supposed to be India's ultimate frontier, to inspect the tea plantations, and to study the prospects of trade with the regions of the vast interior, including, especially, Thibet. As the final goal of a series of journeys through the Himalayas, he





LORD ELGIN WITH LADY ELGIN AND LADY LOUISA BRUCE AT PETERHOF,  
SIMLA, 1863







intended to reach Peshawur, the most distant post on the Afghan frontier. Thence he was to go to Lahore, where he had arranged that the Legislative Council should meet amid considerable pomp to mark the occasion of its first assemblage away from Calcutta. The time seemed opportune for this long journey: the only cloud on the political horizon was a frontier trouble with Sitana fanatics which Sir Hugh Rose, the Commander-in-Chief, was quelling; though not, as the event proved, without some shedding of blood.

No consciousness of failing strength had come to Lord Elgin. He enjoyed greatly the wild beauty of the mountains. The Rotung Pass, from the valley of the Beas to that of the Chenab, took him through the grandest scenery in the world, but over roads so rough that often he struggled on foot up the mountain passes. Sometimes the route was through vast cedar forests, sometimes over snowy mountain spurs. In reality it was killing work. At some points he was 13,000 or 14,000 feet above the sea. The mountain air affected his heart, and the end was near.

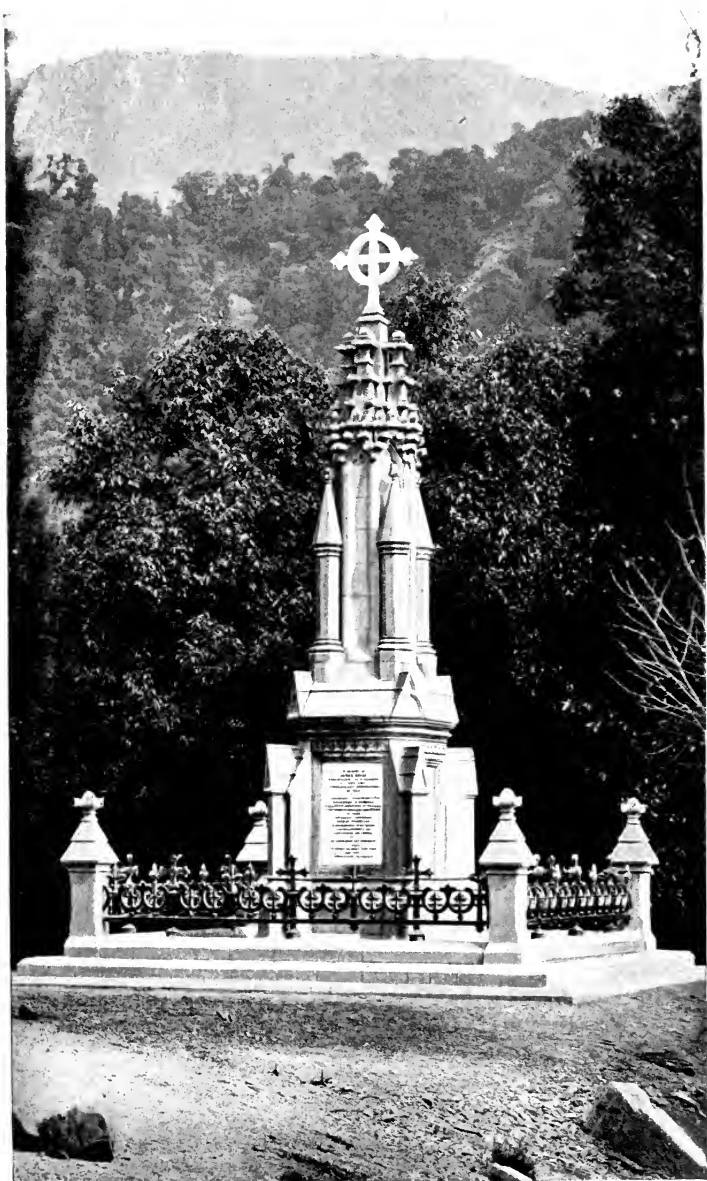
He met streams of traders from Thibet. Everything was most primitive. Three Moravian missionaries in Lahoul came to him on snow-shoes to tell of their work. At Bejoura he used a ferry, supported on inflated skins, such as Xenophon describes in use in the Asia of his time, and another primitive crossing was to prove fatal. Across the Chandra there was a far-famed Twig



Bridge. A new wooden bridge was nearly completed, but Lord Elgin walked across the Twig Bridge, and, as he said, found it about the most difficult job he ever attempted. Through the meshes of the birch branches, even sheep would sometimes fall, and the bridge was in a bad state of repair. With the exertion, he overstrained himself, and was completely prostrated; and, though the journey was continued, he never really rallied. When his condition was seen to be serious, by slow stages he was taken to Dhurm-sala, high up in the Himalayas. That death was near was evident. Though his daughter, Lady Louisa Bruce, was with him, Lady Elgin had not been equal to the mountain journey, and had returned to Calcutta. Both she and his physician and friend, Dr. Macrae, came to him, but it was apparent from the first that the only thing to do was to prepare for the end.

Perhaps to fewer than we suppose does death come as the great enemy. "Hallelujah! the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. We shall meet again," Lord Elgin said, when he knew his condition. For two weeks he lay dying, and his sufferings were so great that at times he prayed to be released. At the hands of the clergyman, for whose coming he watched anxiously, he partook of the Holy Communion, and soon after he said, "It is a comfort to have laid aside all the cares of this world, and put myself in the hands of God." He asked again and again to see the





LORD ELGIN'S TOMB AT DHURMSALA







portrait of the beloved child who had just died, and spoke fervently of meeting his "angel boy" in another world. Earthly affairs faded from his mind. He found delight in hearing chapters from the Bible, and among them were the words of Isaiah, "It is God that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers. . . . He bloweth upon them and they wither." He had said of Canning, that he played his life against a not unworthy stake, and that his fate was not to be deplored. Probably he felt that of himself also was this true. On November 20 he died. The next day he was laid quietly and without funeral pomp in the grave at Dhurmsala, at a spot which, by his request, Lady Elgin rode up, a few days before, to select. He lies on the mountain side. Above him tower the snow-clad Himalayas, and beneath are the hill and plain of those remote provinces of the Empire he served so well.

Lord Elgin never occupied a position where the highest qualities of leadership could be shown, for even in India his career was chiefly that of an administrator under the authority of the Home Government. He possessed massive intellectual power, and in this was the equal of the best of his contemporaries. But the life of keen debate, of eager struggle with men as strong as himself, of strenuous battle for a reform, or an opinion, was little known to him, and because he missed this fierce joy of battle, perhaps he missed also



some further development of which his rich nature was capable. With the scene of his life in England, he would have been one of the rulers of the nation. To tasks not less difficult he was called, and tasks that required greater sacrifices, for they meant the loss of the thing he loved best, the life at home with his family around him. His reserved nature sometimes kept those who met him from understanding the depth and beauty of his character. But in his letters to her who shared his inmost thoughts, the heart of the strong and tender man is laid bare. Surely Imperial Britain is at her best when she sends such men to be her pro-consuls in distant regions, and in the long roll of those who thus have served her, none has loved justice more truly, or pursued it with less thought of self, than did Lord Elgin. "During a public service of twenty years," he once said of himself, "I have always sided with the weaker party." When Mr. Gladstone died, the tribute of his chief opponent was, that "a great Christian" had passed away. At Toronto, Lord Elgin once spoke publicly of himself as "a humble Christian man." To say that in the West and in the East, amid scenes where, certainly, not the best passions of men come to the front, this quality of his character pervaded all that he thought and did, is to offer to his memory the praise that he himself would have valued most.



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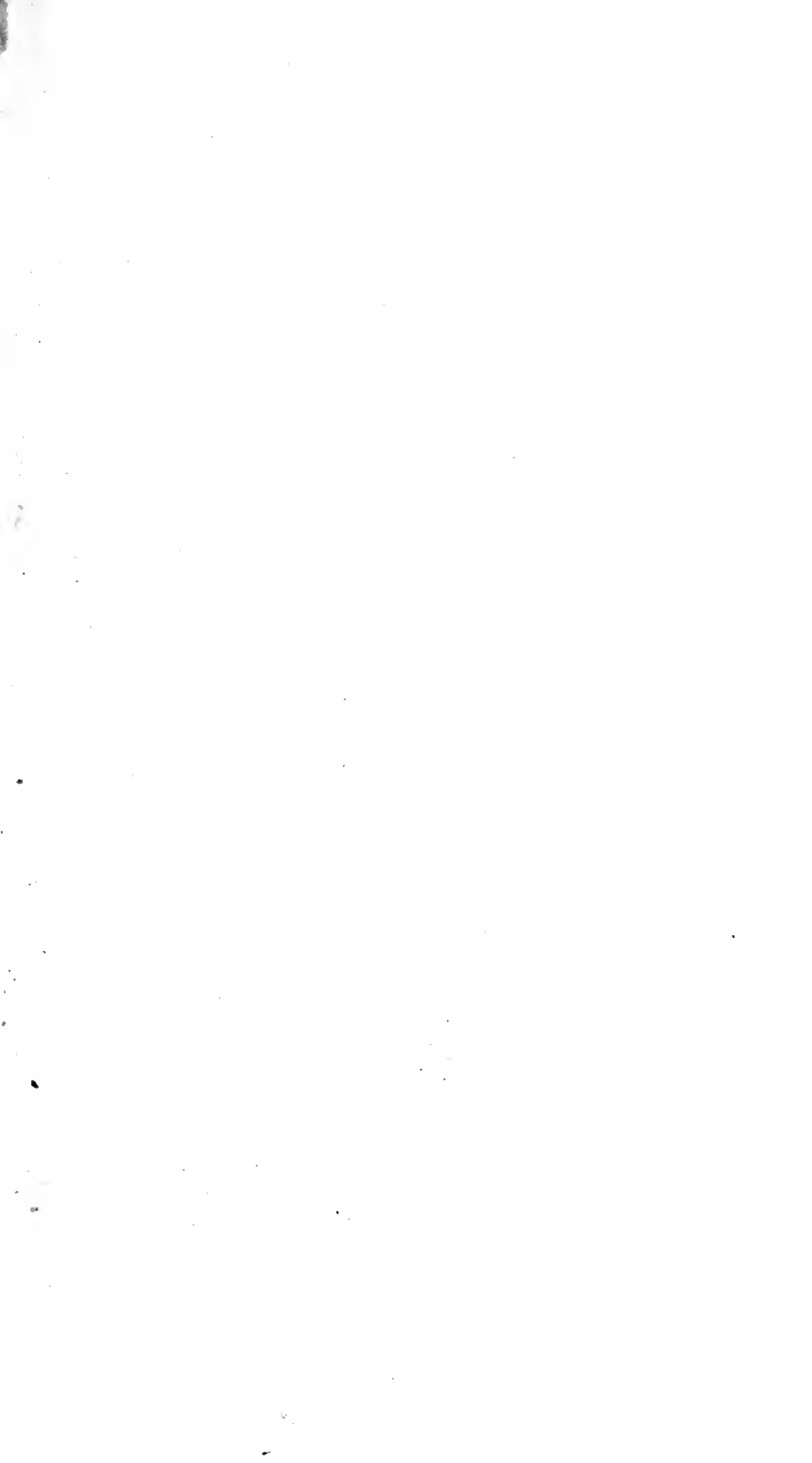
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